The Only Magazine in America that Hasn't Put The Simpsons on the Cover!



The Animation Fan's Magazine   Number Twenty Two $3.25

Beauty and the Beast

An Interview with Director Kirk Wise

Plus: Interviews with Independent Animator SALLY CRUIKSHANK, Disney Artist WALT PEREGOY, and Fleischer Animator MYRON WALDMAN; NICKELODEON'S NEW TOONS; GUMMI BEARS; BUGS ON BROADWAY; News, Reviews, and Much More!



Animato

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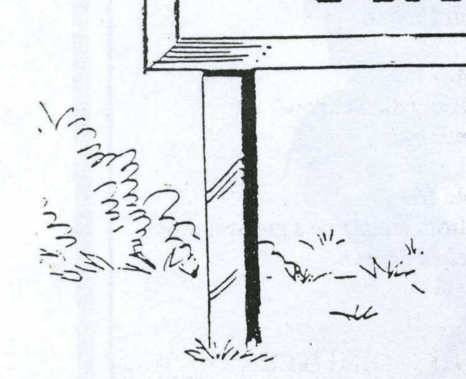
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Articles and Commentary

Columns

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Fan Mail From Some Flounder

Write to Animato at PO Box 1240, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA 02238

GRIM REMEMBERED
Reg Hartt
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

I greatly appreciated your Grim Natwick coverage. I had the pleasure of doing several events with Grim and enjoyed many hours of dialogue with him plus a couple of heavy drinking sessions.

Grim was everything that, should I live to be 100, I would want to be.

WHERE WAS THELMA?
John Beam
East Lansing, Michigan

I really enjoyed the last issue. The Maurice Noble and Grim Natwick interviews and subsequent Grim memories place #21 head and shoulders above all the other issues I have in my library.

I thought that Bob Miller's review of **Captain Planet and the Planeteers** was hilarious. Take that, Ted Turner!

Missed though were the Film Poll and "A Little Birdie Told Me." What has happened to Thelma Scumm anyway? Her biting but humorous views of the business have been a favorite of mine. Don't tell me she's no longer with us!

(OK, we won't. Thelma and the Film Poll got bumped simply because there was so much good material for the last issue. She, of course, did not take this too lightly.)

FRANKLYN FAN
Hans Heidler
Algonquin, Illinois

Your last issue was good, but I must comment on the review of the Carl Stalling CD.

It is a very good CD and I agree with your review, but when your reviewer listed other excellent cartoon music directors (Bradley, Calker, Hatley), he overlooked the other Warners music master, Milt Franklyn.

He was responsible for some great scores, including *Baton Bunny*, *One Froggy Evening*, and the famous *What's Opera, Doc?* At least conductor George Dougherty gives Franklyn a nod in the "Bugs Bunny on Broadway" performance. But I guess anyone who comes in after a master gets overshadowed - just ask Art Davis!

TWICE UPON WHICH TIME?
Jed Martinez
Floral Park, New York

When John Cawley mentioned in *Animato* #21 that **Twice Upon a Time** was being released on video, you should have asked him what version.

You see, I got to see it on HBO nearly seven years ago, and one week after its original airing, it got cleaned up for the younger audience. Most of the obscenities were exorcised. In one scene, the villain voiced by Marshall Efron finds something in his navel and proceeds to eat it - all while he's behind a screen taking a bath. In the redubbed version, he's just singing to himself instead.

If it is being released in the "softcore" version, I'm not buying it. . .not even for the sake of that hilarious scene with Rod Rescueman and the Fairy Godmother.

BARRIER SNAFU
Mike Barrier
Alexandria, Virginia

A minor correction to Matthew Hasson's review of Bosko Video's Private Snafu tape in #21: Matt says that the tape begins with "a printed prologue by Mike Barrier."

I agree with Matt that the prologue contains "some interesting information," but I didn't write it. I simply shared with Dave Butler information I had gathered about the Snafu cartoons (mainly from the Defense Audiovisual Agency's files.) Dave deserves credit for the prologue as well as for general excellence of the tape.

TINY TOONS CORRECTION
Paul Dini
Los Angeles, California

Thanks to Dave Mackey for his detailed and generally excellent episode guide to **Tiny Toons!** For the sake of historical accuracy however, I feel compelled to point out that the *Li'l Sneezer* episode was written in collaboration by Sherry Stoner and myself and not Stephen Langford as the on-screen credits claimed. Steve and I teamed up on *To Bleep Or Not To Bleep* and somehow the writer credits for those two cartoons got switched. There's no way Dave could have known that of course so I thought I'd straighten it out here.

Looking forward to the 1991 season update!

MORE TINY TOONS NOTES
Brad Walker
Santa Rosa, California

The **Tiny Toons** episode guide was excellent. I think **TTA** is one of the best shows on TV this season for kids and adults and I'm looking forward to the few episodes I've missed, particularly *TT: Music Television.*

In general I hold with Dave Mackey's comments - I'm going to try **Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventures** after his recommendation - but there are some comments I am moved to make:

I don't know how Dave can give such a high rating to *The Anvil Chorus*; Plucky does nothing to deserve this punishment. And this in the same issue where Harry McCracken complains about Roger Rabbit's lack of humanity.

The *Fields of Honey* entry gave me the most problems. Honey and Bosko as seen here are not the same characters seen every night on Nickelodeon. As Plucky says of Honey, "Is she a bug? A dog? What?" If Tiny Toons wants to pretend Honey was never a stereotypical "pickaninny," that's one thing but they changed her character as well. Honey was much more passive and reactive in the Harman-Ising shorts. She depended on Bosko to rescue her (and considering how effective Bosko generally was, she had some hope). She never sprouted Betty Boop and Harpo costumes at the drop of a hat. That was retro-fitted to make her a suitable "prototype" for Babs. *Fields of Honey* is a well done cartoon, but it smacks too much of revisionism. Oh well, at least they didn't bring back Chimp and Zee.

Actually the femme fatale in *The Return of Pluck Twacy* was not based on the *Super Snooper* duck but Mata Hari Pigeon (short beak) from the wartime cartoon *Plane Daffy* ("'Hitler is a stinker?!' Dot's no military secret!" "Yah, *efferybody* knows dot!"). The cartoon is almost a literal remake of *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* - to the point where kids who never saw the original won't know what's going on. (*Tickle* Puss? Flat *Bottom*?) The whole Peter Lorre train sequence goes on too long.

Sorry, Dave but *The Roches* weren't given that material; it's their own. I heard them perform it more than a decade ago on Dr. Demento.

The voice of the evil ringmaster in *Sawdust and Toonsil* was patterned after Ronald Reagan.

The storyline and character design from *Starting From Scratch* are a takeoff on Amblin's **An American Tail.**

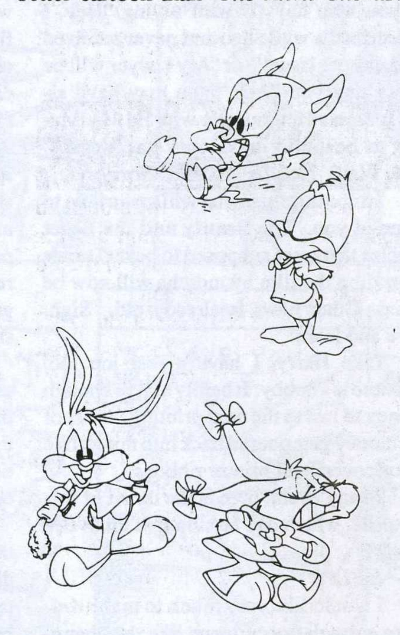
Keep up the good work!

SAY NO TO ANVILS
Donald Alan Webster
Hapeville, Georgia

I was pleased that you published Dave Mackey's filmography to **Tiny Toons Adventures**, but I was surprised by some of his ratings. . .

For stars for *The Anvil Chorus*! that was one of the most awful cartoons on this show and any other! How can anyone be "justifiably proud" of this mess? What was wrong with it was pointed out in the cartoon itself. When Plucky reads the script it says "An anvil falls on Plucky. Two anvils fall on Plucky. A giant anvil falls on Plucky." There is no plot and barely a premise. It is just the same bad gag repeated over and over again. One anvil falling on Plucky might be funny under certain circumstances but 40 anvils is 39 anvils too many.

Five stars for *Fields of Honey* was also undeserved although it was a much better cartoon than *The Anvil Chorus*.



Fields had some good scenes such as Babs' attempts to get money out of Montana Max, but the climax was flawed. The Honey cartoons were just not as falling down hilarious enough to justify the way the audience in the cartoon was reacting. In fact, Honey was never a major cartoon character, but merely a racist rip-off of Minnie Mouse. *Fields of Honey* tried to obscure this by giving them animal ears and by having Plucky speculate that they were some kind of bug, making this cartoon, on top of everything else, dishonest.

On the other hand, Mackey was right to give four stars to *C Flat or B Sharp?* and *Slugfest*. Some others were not too far off.

WHAT IS CLASSIC DISNEY?
Ross Care
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

As a classic Disney buff, I was interested in the Harry McCracken review of **The Little Mermaid**. I know most criticism is subjective opinion, especially animation criticism, but I don't see how the writer could even compare the visual style of the new film to **Cinderella**.

Visually and story-development-wise, **Cinderella** put the Disney studio back on the right trackand paved the way for the renaissance of feature animation of the early '50s.

I thought just the opposite of McCracken: that **The Little Mermaid** had the story development and emotional impact back on the right track, but that it didn't comer near the visual style and color styling of **Cinderella** and the ensuing features.

Little Mermaid reminded me more of watered down Fleischer than of classic Disney, particularly in the backgrounds and color styling.

I feel Disney reached a stylistic peak in the 1950-1959 features that will probably never be equalled or recaptured, even by the new Disney studio itself. For pure throw-away technique and naturalness of human animation, probably no animation will *ever* surpass the '50s trilogy of **Cinderella, Alice in Wonderland,** and **Peter Pan.**

CLASSIFIED ADS

Here's our new policy on classified ads: Ads are FREE to *Animato* subscribers for the purposes of finding pen pals, trading tapes, or otherwise engaging in nonprofit activities.

For businesses and people wishing to sell things, the cost is 15 cents a word.

For display ads, the price is $75 for a full page ad, $40 for a half page, and $20 for a quarter page. Note: these prices are likely to rise soon as our circulation keeps improving. Send a SASE for information.

BACK ISSUES

The following back issues are still available at the cost of $4.00 apiece (postage paid):

#17: Ralph Bakshi interview; Chinese Animation; *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*; Jack Hannah interview

#20: Bugs Bunny's 50th; Bill Justice interview; *Robotech*; *Pinocchio*; *Gulliver's Travels.*

#21: Maurice Noble interview; *Rescuers Down Under* review and interview with director Mike Gabriel; Grim Natwick; *Tiny Toons* guide

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are for four issues. Subscriptions are $10.00 in the United States and $15.00 elsewhere.

We apologize to our Canadian subscribers who have to pay extra but with the recent increases in postal rates in the U.S., we have switched to 3rd class bulk mailings in the U.S. which helps us to keep the cover price down.

Please make all checks and money orders payable to *Animato*. Be sure to indicate with which issue you want your subscription to begin.

ANIMATORIAL

by Mike Ventrella

Important editorials are written in the third person which makes them sound as if they are being proclaimed from ahigh in much the same way Kings or Gods talk to us common folk: "We are not amused blah blah blah..." I hope you will forgive me for not engaging in that particular tradition for this one editorial because, well, there's not much *we* here.

You see, Harry (who was we before I became we again) and I used to get a chuckle every now and then by some letter addressed to "*Animato*, Subscription Department" as if deep in the recesses of our 3 x 5 post office box overlooking scenic Harvard Square there was a subbasement filled with hundreds of employees just anxious to fill every subscription order with a curt "Yes, Sir, Mr. McCracken!" and "I'll get right on it, Mr. Ventrella!"

Fat chance.

You see, to tell the awful truth, *Animato* is still after all these years primarily a one person operation.

When Harry took over from me as editor a few years ago, he vastly improved *Animato*. He enlarged it to regular magazine size, got it professionally printed instead of xeroxed, added color, new writers, and generally made *Animato* into a magazine that, to all outward appearances, is as professional as any other small magazine. But he really did it all by himself. And for no pay.

He organized advertisers, laid out pages, wrote articles, dealt with distributors and managed just about every aspect of the magazine. This took a lot of time, and *Animato* did not come out quarterly like we had originally hoped. We were lucky to have three issues a year, but we felt that quality was more important than quantity.

I foolishly never really fully appreciated the amount of time and effort it took to put together an issue until Harry quit to accept a job with *Computer Buying Magazine* that actually pays him money for being an editor. I had been handling the mailing chores, the bookkeeping and back orders during that time but otherwise kept a low profile. I had my own jobs to do and other projects I had started.

However I did not want *Animato* to die. I agreed to keep it going by taking over as editor. I set what I thought was a realistic cover date of August and got to work.

Fat chance.

So let me begin by apologizing to all of you who have written saying "Hey, I subscribed a while ago and never received my summer issue!" or "My lawyer will be contacting you!" or "You may have already won a fabulous trip with Ed MacMahon to beautiful downtown Las Vegas!" No! Wait! Not the last one. Sorry.

I hope that this issue will make it up to some of you. **The Beauty and the Beast** articles that were supposed to be real treats preceding the film by months will now be dated Other news is already old. Sigh. Live and learn.

Like Harry, I have a real job too. *Animato* is a hobby. It barely makes enough money to last to the next printing. Most of the money gets poured back into things like color covers and printer ribbons.

In any event, here is the thrust of this editorial, which can be summed up in one word:

HELP!

I would like very much to make *Animato* a regular occurrence like the changing of the seasons or the announcement of a new Ralph Bakshi project. I'd like it to be found at every newsstand and in every home. I'd like to pay the staff and the writers.

But I need help.

So I'm placing a help wanted ad right here in the editorial. If you think you can fulfill any of these positions, drop me a line. Mention your experience and tell me how to get in touch with you. You don't even have to live in the Boston area; most of the work is done over the phone and by the mails anyway. And maybe, if I fill all these spots, we can be a real magazine! (By the way, if reading this aloud, you should pronounce "a real magazine" in the same way that Pinocchio says "a real boy!" when speaking to the Blue Fairy.)

Here's what we need:

Typists: We need people who can type articles into IBM compatible formats so I can plug 'em into Pagemaker. (I spent a lot of time with this issue typing contributions.) I also would very much like to do a "Best Of" magazine so I need people who can type in old articles from our pre-desktop publishing days.

Graphic Artists: Primarily I need people who can do cover layouts and ad layouts. Especially if you can do color separation.

Writers: I can always accept people willing to write reviews of new shows and films. Just go ahead and submit your comments! I may not print them, but if you can write and know what you're writing about, throw me a sample. I am hoping to add a section to *Animato* called Reader's Reviews, where you can review new TV shows and theatrical films and such. There may even be more than one review of a particular show, but I believe people will really like this feature, and if you're really good, I'm sure soon I'll be assigning you stories for future issues.

An Advertising Manager: I need someone who can solicit ads, make sure they are submitted in time, and paid soon thereafter. (This position will probably become the first paid position based on commissions).

A Distributor Liaison: I am certain that if we merely try we can find magazine distributors around the country willing to take on poor little *Animato*. I find it hard to believe that a newsstand that carries such well read publications like *Sunflower Seed Grower's Digest* and *Nailbiters Weekly* could say no to us.

A Librarian: This person would have the job of keeping photos, drawings and any other materials that may be of use to us in future issues and to find things when needed. ("I need a drawing of Daffy Duck in **Quackbusters**, a photo of Walt Kelly drawing the cherubs in **Fantasia** and an autographed picture of Huckleberry Hound by Tuesday!") This would also require calling the publicity departments of the studios for materials when needed.

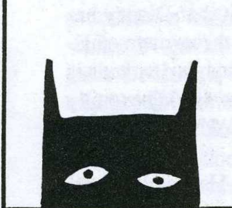
A Printer: I hope our current printer doesn't read this, but obviously if we can find a loyal reader who has a connection to some printing facility and is willing to discount a poor helpless magazine trying to get on its feet, why, I wouldn't say no.

If you have any other talents I haven't thought of that may help make *Animato* a real magazine (remember to pronounce that right), please do not hesitate to send off a letter.

So once more, my apologies for those who hope for a more regular publishing schedule and my thanks for those of you who will be willing to help make this come true.

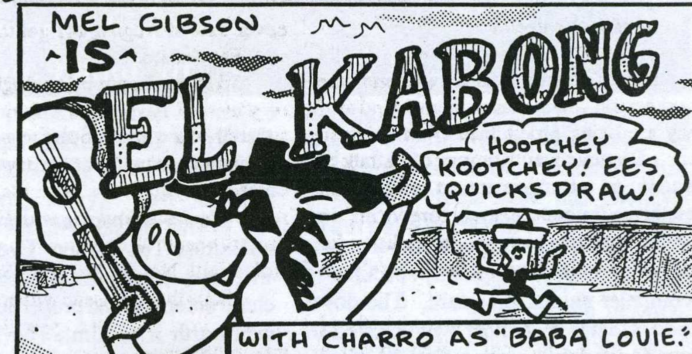
JAY RATHO'S CARTOON PARADE

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF MICHAEL KEATON IN "BATMAN,"

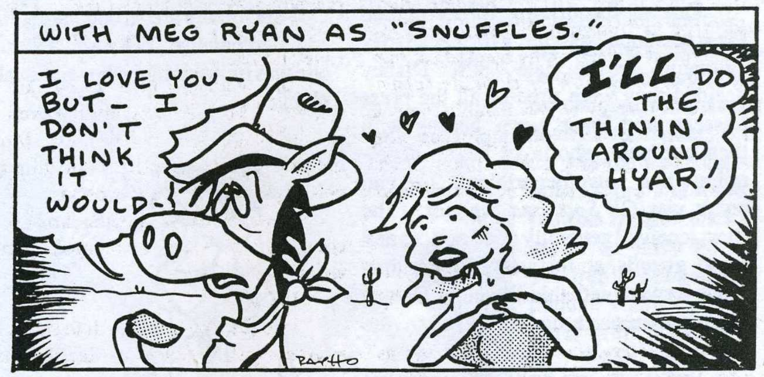


AND THE SUCCESS OF WARREN BEATTY IN "DICK TRACY"...









PERESTROIKA— AND WITH IT, GLASNOST!



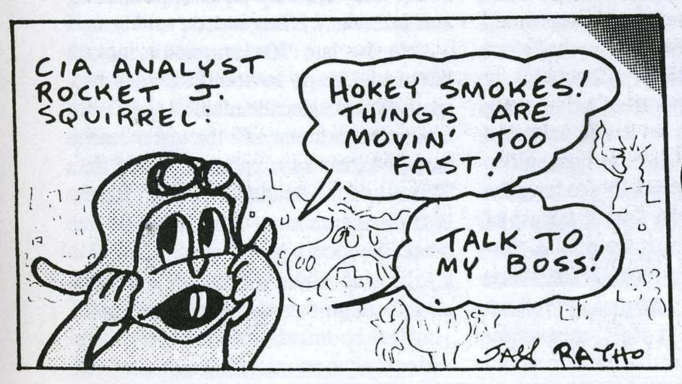
BUT FOR SOME, IT'S NOT WELCOME.



FORMER KGB AGENT BORIS YELSIN BADENOV HAS FOUND HIS LIFE SHATTERED. HIS LONG-TIME LIVE-IN FRIEND, NATASHA, APPEARED IN THE "PLAYBOY: WOMEN OF THE USSR" ISSUE!



CIA ANALYST ROCKET J. SQUIRREL:



BADENOV, OUT OF A JOB, FEARS DISCLOSURE OF HIS PAST DEEDS.



Get Animated! Industry Watch

News and Commentary
by John Cawley

ANIMONOPOLY

Disney recently announced they had made an arrangement to release computer animated features produced by Pixar. On one level this was good news: A major studio was finally backing a computer animated feature. The down side is that it is another sign that studios would rather buy product than develop it.

One of the driving forces behind Pixar was John Lasseter, a former Disney animator. In the late '80s, Disney decided they were tired of all the press Lasseter and Pixar were getting with their computer shorts so began developing their own department. The end result was *Oil Spot and Lipstick*. The short received generally good notices and some awards at festivals. Rather than move forward with this direction, Disney has taken the more modern way out... the buy-out.

Perhaps the most shocking business trend of the '80s was the taking over of one company by another. Most of these were done for the purpose of either greed or an attempt to centralize. In Hollywood, the result was a lot of executive shuffling, studios collapsing, and escalating prices.

Following in this grand tradition, the giants of animation are doing the same --only with properties. Today's economy sadly makes it more economical to buy properties than develop them. Purchase the Muppets and you have instant income revenues. Start from scratch and you could end up with nothing more than a minor film or TV series and moderate merchandising.

The majors in this battle are Disney, Universal, Warners and Spielberg. Disney touts its character strengths and has been seeking other outside properties to purchase. Universal has made arrangements with Harvey to handle Casper and other Harvey characters. (Meanwhile Harvey keeps adding outside characters to their comics line.) Universal also acquired many rights to Rocky and Bullwinkle for use in their studio tour parks. Spielberg seems to be content borrowing or converting characters.

Hanna-Barbera is now owned by the ubiquitous Ted Turner. Even though it will cost hundreds of millions to purchase the studio and properties, it will be well worth it to him. The Flintstones, Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, Scooby-Doo and others are strong names in TV and merchandise. For a while though no one was quite certain who would take the plunge.



A key suitor had been Universal, who had already done some deals with H-B such as the animation attraction at Universal's Florida studio tour. Another suitor had been the Disney studio. Disney previously had been vehement in the denial of interest. However, this was from the studio that claimed they would not buy a TV station four weeks before they purchased KHJ-TV (Channel 9 in Los Angeles); announced at a stock holder meeting that no major animated features would be released on home video during the Spring period only to have the press materials on the Spring release of **Little Mermaid** put in the mail a few days later; and more recently stated that there were definitely no plans to release **Fantasia** on video in 1991 only to announce one week later that the film would be released in November of 1991. It has recently come to light that Disney has had several talks with the owners of H-B. Allegedly one of Disney's demands is that the H-B characters would be totally pulled out of all MCA/Universal dealings.

A third suitor was Hallmark Cards! Obviously not wanting to miss out on the character auction action, Hallmark had expressed interest in acquiring the characters.

So what becomes of the characters now? One cannot forget the sale several years ago of Filmation. The new owners merely wanted the film library to exploit in syndication and video. No new productions were desired and the studio was shut down with only a few hours notice to employees.

Will Turner spend the money, time and experience to fully re-develop these characters? Or will the characters simply become more fodder for the merchandise departments? Or will they just go to jail and not be able to pass "go"?

THREE BOOMS AND THEIR VIEWS

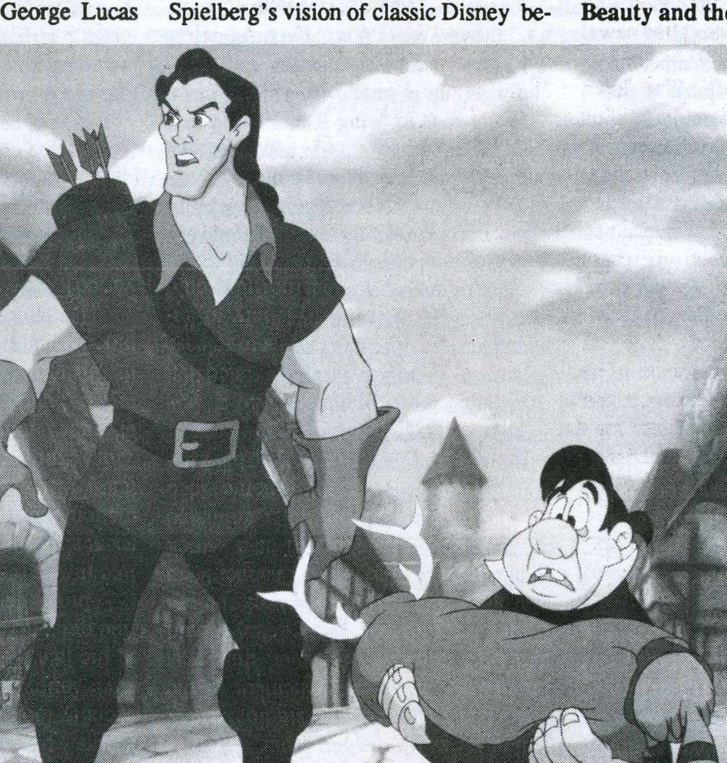
The release to home video of **Twice Upon a Time** was a reminder of the recent "animation booms" and how they differed. Like most over night successes, the current animation boom actually took a long time. Those who have followed the boom since it began in the late '70s may be disappointed to find out where it has ended.

In the late '70s, animation looked like it was ready to boom. Disney had spent almost a decade rebuilding its animation department. At the last moment many of their key people walked out. This exodus, headed by Don Bluth, brought animation into focus in the press. Suddenly people were interested in hearing about animation and new blood was producing animated features.

This boom promised to bring a more varied look to animation. Bluth was tired

of the "kiddie movie" attitude at Disney and wanted more of the strong heart and drama found in the original Disney classics. Martin Rosen, who felt animated films could be as serious as real movies, had done fairly well with **Watership Down** and was preparing **The Plague Dogs**. Rankin-Bass jumped on the bandwagon and touted two serious productions based on major fantasy works (**Flight of the Dragons** and **The Last Unicorn**). Even George Lucas expressed interest in stretching the boundaries of animation past children's entertainment with **Twice Upon a Time**. Meanwhile, the original, Ralph Bakshi, continued his fight to legitimize "adult" animated features.

Of the few films that finally saw completion, only a handful actually got theatrical releases in the US. Those that did, generally received mixed reviews. The most remembered feature of the period is probably Bluth's **Secret of NIMH**. However, even it did not perform well at the box office. In some ways this was the "boom" that never was. It was merely a wannabe boom.



The Care Bears Movie was the real kick start to the animation boom. Produced by Nelvana, who had also failed in the wannabe boom with their **Rock & Rule** (aka **Ring of Power**), **The Care Bears Movie** performed as well as an average Disney release.

The press showed equal interest in this kiddie merchandise boom, but via critical articles. The studios saw green and went with it anyway. After a flood of toy based films, this mini-boom fizzled quickly due to the lackluster box office of the films (and not because of the cry of outraged children's groups). This theatrical boom was equaled by a similar syndicated TV boom that continues to this day.

Finally, one of the original boom participants, Don Bluth, coupled with Steven Spielberg with the result being **An American Tail**. By breaking all box office records for animation, it dethroned Disney as the sole big box office animation producer. However, unlike Bluth's belief that the success of the classic Disneys were due to a more dramatic, adult story, **Tail** offered Spielberg's vision of classic Disney being a children's film.

Equally strong box office for Disney's **Oliver and Company**, Spielberg/Lucas/Bluth's **Land Before Time** and the critical and public acceptance of **Who Framed Roger Rabbit** cemented animation into the movie producer's psyche. This new boom seemed to peak with the promotional and box office frenzy surrounding **The Little Mermaid**.

Sadly, this new boom is actually closer to the mini-boom than the wannabe boom of the late '70s. Though the number of animated productions is up, most of them are aimed more towards children or merchandised (well known) properties. There is none of the experimental attitude found in the '70s. Studio accountants seemed to have learned their lesson in the mini-boom and are playing it safe.

Such films as **Twice Upon a Time** and **The Plague Dogs** might find a more willing audience today due to the higher interest in animation. But they probably wouldn't garner a big audience since both are geared more towards adults than children. Some state that Disney's **Beauty and the Beast** is an attempt to woo adult audiences with a more mature handling of the material. But any film with a bumbling sidekick to help the villain and talking furniture seems to be crying out more to the children's and merchandising markets.

As the boom continues more and more projects are announced based on fairy tales, children's books and popular characters or stars. Well, maybe not all. Ralph Bakshi is still kicking around. However his newest entry, **Cool World**, will (according to a studio representative) "definitely not be Rated R." Even Ralph seems to have gone the safe route.

BOOM BUSTING?

Though there is no end of new titles scheduled to appear in theaters over the next several months, and though new projects are being discussed, the boom has settled a bit. Missing from the past several years of frantic activity is animation work.

Hyperion (**Rover Dangerfield**) let their employees go in the late spring. Kroyer (**Ferngully**) released their staff in midsummer. Both are hoping to begin work on new projects and plan to bring their talent back as soon as possible.

Sinbad (announced from Franck Entertainment to be directed by John Landis) has been halted in production due to funding difficulties. A situation that has

occurred several times in this film's history. *Family Dog* released all their U.S. staff opting to have the work finished in Canada by Nelvana.

What this means is that for the first time in several years, there is animation talent available. Studios are no longer have to fight wage wars to find talent. And with the closing of these major projects, some top talent is once again available. Will this mean the studios still with work will begin building stronger crews by releasing those deemed "not" as strong as the now available talent?

Even Disney is thinning its ranks, citing an "austerity" program. One executive stated that in the current market, the studio couldn't afford to maintain a staff of artists that weren't fully needed or unable to keep up with the demands of the industry. Even individuals under contract have been reported let go.

Many hope that the release of features in the Fall will prove successful and create continued interest in the genre. Hyperion has already put many of its workers on an "unpaid" contract in which the worker refuses work from other studios while waiting to come back to Hyperion. However, they are only paid when actually working at Hyperion.

Too early to declare it "over," the bust has hit its first sag. The future now rides on how successfully at the box office the next wave of features is.

ALL THUMBS

In the early '80s it was suddenly "in" to do werewolf movies and several popped up at once. Then there was the recent rush to bring Robin Hood to the screen as several studios battled to be the "major" release. Next is the mad dash for vampire films with no less than half a dozen planned by some of the biggest names in the business.

Animation seems to follow similar trends. Disney, alone, is notorious for announcing projects similar to other studios' previous announcements. For example, when Bluth announced he was beginning development on **Beauty and the Beast**, Disney instantly announced they would do a version. More recently, Rich Entertainment (who received feature funding from ex-Bluth funder Goldcrest) announced a string of features that included **Swan Lake**. A week later Disney announced they were working on a feature with the same title. (To be fair to Disney, the studio announced in the '50s it was working on a version of **Beauty and the Beast.**)

The current hot property in animation seems to indicate studios are starting to think small, for the newest animated fad is **Thumbelina.** Sullivan Bluth has had **Thumbelina** in production since early this year. However two other studios are currently in pre-production on it. Both Hyperion and Bagdasarian (**The Chipmunks**) are rapidly trying to get their features into production.

With the gigantic selection of children's stories available to convert, it seems amazing that studios would compete on such a deadly level. The only reason to do so would be an attempt to squash another studio's project.



A FLEISCHER STUDIOS COLUMN BY G. MICHAEL DOBBS

Reminiscing with Myron Waldman

We all know the pantheon of Animation Gods...at Warners, there were Jones, Clampett, Freleng...at MGM, there were Harmon and Ising and then Avery...at UPA, there was Hubley...but what about Fleischer? Who made all of those great cartoons? Who were the guiding hands?

Well, we can't give Dave Fleischer all the credit. Dave was many things to many people. To some, he was one of the best gag men in the business, and to others he was a just high-priced executive.

Dave did add to story development, but I've never heard anyone say he ever designed characters or worked on a storyboard like many other cartoon directors. Most people say he couldn't draw, although people sympathetic to Dave's memory do say he was an artist.

Dave was very interested in the soundtrack of the cartoon, and did direct the recording sessions, working closely with voice actors Mae Questel and Jack Mercer and supervising the composition of the music track. After his time at Fleischer Studios, Dave had a lengthy career directing cartoon at Columbia Pictures, doing story editing and special effects in Hollywood.

And Max can't take full credit either. After the the coming of sound, Max, originally an artist and animator, had agreed with his brother Dave to stay out of the production end of Fleischer Studios. Max's domain was the business side of the studio. This agreement had less to do with a natural division of labor and had far more to do with the relationship between the eldest and youngest sibling of the Fleischer family.

Max was far more than a businessman, unlike, for instance, Fred Quimby at MGM. Max's contributions were many. He had developed the rotoscope and the *Out of the Inkwell* series, edited and produced three documentaries, experimented with synchronized sound before Disney, brought Popeye to the studio, developed the three-dimension process and pushed for the move into feature production. Max did not attend many story conferences (although I have seen a script for one proposed cartoon covered with his notes in red pencil), and he didn't supervise daily production.

Then how did the classic Popeye, Betty Boop, Out of the Inkwell and Superman shorts get made?

For those of us who watched cartoons a little more closely than other film enthusiasts, it's easy to tell the difference between a Chuck Jones Bugs Bunny and a Friz Freleng Bugs Bunny. There's little difficulty in picking a Tex Avery Droopy from one not directed by Avery. With the Fleischer cartoons, the ever-present directorial credit of Dave Fleischer has assured anonymity for the many talented animators who actually did do the directing.

Well, this column is going to be an unabashed love letter to one of the directors of animation at the Fleischer Studio who was indeed responsible for so many wonderful moments in animation. Few of the people who did directly create the Fleischer style, look and sound are alive today to take well-deserved bows.

The gentleman who is the subject of this column is thankfully very alive and active. I first Myron Waldman in 1977 at Hal Seeger Productions in Manhattan. Seeger, a former Fleischer employee himself, had a busy animation operation in the '60s and '70s, and Myron was one of his directors. Myron took me into a back room and regaled me with stories about his time at Fleischer.

During a good part of the interview I was attempting to figure out just how old he was as he looked no more than 55. Perhaps animation keeps one youthful as Myron was born in 1908 and started at the Fleischer Studios in 1930 after he had graduated from the Fine and Applied Arts program at the Pratt Institute. He started as an opaquer and then moved into the inking department. After winning a studio competition, Myron was promoted to the in-betweening department and from there received a chance to animate.

Myron had grown up watching cartoons and has told me the silent Ko-Ko the Clown cartoons were among his favorites. It was a real thrill for him to actually get to animate Ko-Ko, although the studio's silent star had a limited run in the sound era. Myron's style of humor is centered around whimsy and gentleness. Certainly he could put over a rough-house gag in a Popeye short as well as anyone could, but given his preferences he liked sentiment. I asked him once if he had ever seen Ralph Bakshi's **Lord of the Rings**, and he replied that he didn't care for the horror aspects of the work and had avoided seeing it.

Knowing this, it's easy to see his influence on the Popeye shorts. The first appearances of Popeye showed the potential, but little else, of the lovable character who had emerged by the mid-Thirties. Myron helped the character change from a slapstick streetfighter, which meant the studio was actually more faithful to

E.C.Segar's comic strip original. In Depression America, Popeye was a perfect cartoon symbol for the hope of the little guy triumphing over fantastic odds, which undoubtedly accounted for his popularity with audiences overshadowing even that of Mickey Mouse.

Myron worked extensively on the Betty Boop cartoons, and told me that when he had to animate *A Language All My Own* (1935), in which Betty travels to Japan, he did a little research.

Betty was quite popular in Japan, and Myron was concerned that when Betty danced none of her movements would be offensive to the Japanese audience. So he consulted with some Japanese exchange students to make sure nothing would be considered vulgar or rude.

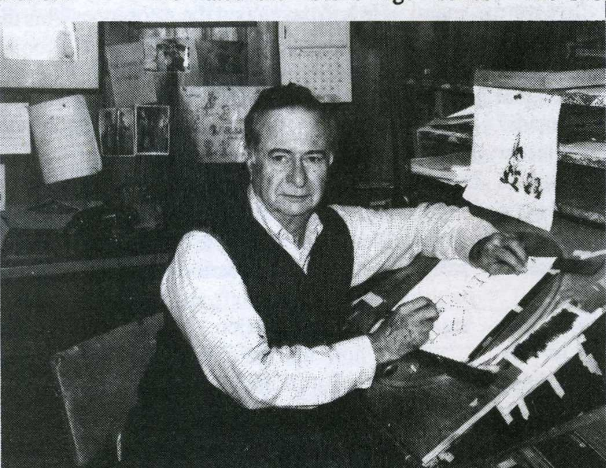
Myron created Betty's little white and black dog, Pudgy, in 1934 to add an additional story element to the series. Betty's cartoons underwent a gradual evolution from the anything-goes surreal atmosphere of the early '30s to a sort of musical situation comedy by the end of the decade. Pudgy was frequently the star of some of the later Boops, such as *Not Now* (1936) in which he has a night-time rumble with a loud cat. Myron receives no royalties from any of the current merchandising which features Pudgy, a condition common to the animation industry.

One of the least-remembered, but beautiful examples of Myron's work was *Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy* (1941). Myron characterizes this two-reel special as an "oooh-ahhh picture." Because of its sentiment, audiences would first murmur "oooh" and then sigh "ahhh." This film was released as a Christmas special and is quite faithful to the tone and look of the original Johnny Gruelle stories. It was successful enough that Paramount later had the successor to the Fleischer Studios, Famous Studios, do two follow-up shorts.

Perhaps no two cartoon efforts could be as different as the Raggedy Ann special and the Fleischer Superman shorts. Myron animated on two of the series, one of which is a favorite of mine, *The Billion Dollar Limited* (1942). Myron enjoyed working on these cartoons, although he has told me they were indeed work! The animators had to adapt to a different style of movement; one far more realistic than in the Popeye or Boops shorts, and Myron enjoyed the challenge.

Myron was an something of an iconoclast at the Fleischer Studio. He didn't approve of the management policies of the company concerning the strike in 1937. He fought against the sexism of the industry by encouraging Lillian Friedman, a pioneer woman animator. Amazingly, he survived and prospered at the studio despite having run-ins with the inner circle of employees who surrounded Max Fleischer.

He hated the "Stone Age" series which ran for one year and was sort of a proto-type for the **Flintstones** 20 years later. To show his displeasure with the cartoons, he walked into Dave Fleischer's office with his copy of the latest "Stone Age" script at the end of a stick. Fleischer asked him what he was doing and Myron replied the script smelled!



World War II interrupted his career in animation, as Myron served in the Army, and when he returned he went back to work with many of his old colleagues at what was now the Famous Studio. There he worked on Screen Songs (with the famous Bouncing Ball), Popeye, Little Lulu and Casper shorts.

In the many wonderful conversations I've had with Myron over the years he always repeated that he "wanted to do more." And he did. He created a "novel with out words," entitled *Eve* which was a critical and financial success when it was published in 1943, and he did the artwork for a popular post-war Sunday comic strip, *Happy the Humbug*. He appeared on television in the 1950s with his "Try A Line" drawing act in which he create a sketch after an audience member drew a line or figure. He's even acted in a commercial for Asian-style noodles!

In the '60s and '70s, he worked on a number of animated television series and commercials including the revival of Ko-Ko the Clown, a bittersweet experience as he wanted to do the new version with as much imagination as the original but was hobbled by a very limited budget.

The pilot film is indeed a nostalgic treat with Ko-Ko being drawn by Max and then proceeding to get into trouble. The short was the last show business appearance by Max Fleischer who Myron remembered as having dyed his hair for the occasion.

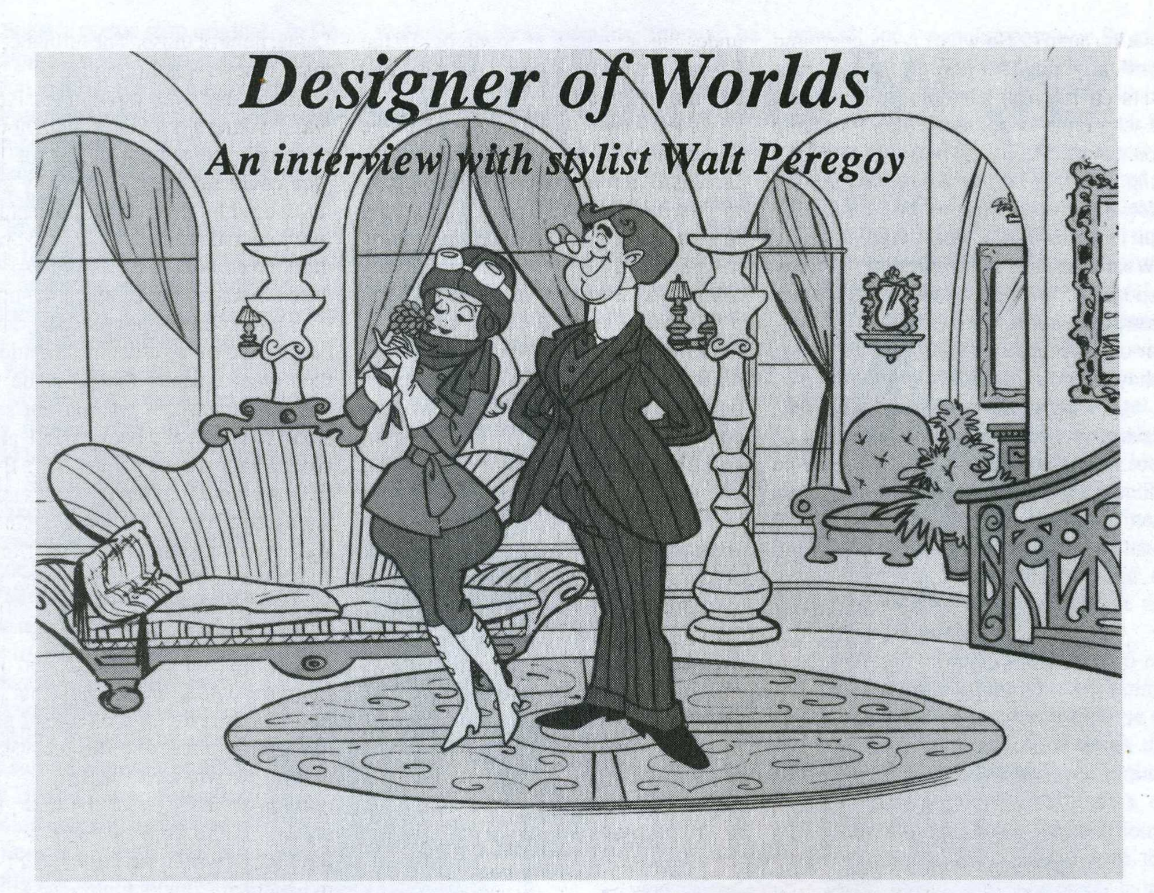
Today, Myron is semi-retired. He has too active a mind to just stop after a lifetime of creating, and he is doing the artwork for a series of limited edition collector's cels of Popeye. The work he is doing today still sparkles with the same charm he brought to his Fleischer work 50 years ago.

Some of today's animation he loves and some...well. . .When I asked him what he thought of **Who Framed Roger Rabbit**, he said they had done it all 50 years ago. All of the basic technology and techniques for combining animation and live action had been used by the Fleischer Studio and others, years ago. Myron noted the difference was **Roger Rabbit** had a budget which dwarfed those of the production he ever animated. Just imagine what might have happened if people such as Myron had been given the money and freedom to pursue their own visions.

Last October, Myron and Shamus Culhane were honored at the annual Ottawa Animation Festival. As Mark Langer of Carleton University introduced these two men at the screening of Fleischer cartoons at the National Center for the Arts, the audience rose and delivered a thunderous standing ovation. It was wonderful to see people whose work has been almost anonymous receive a bit of the acclaim they deserve.

Designer of Worlds

An interview with stylist Walt Peregoy



by Bob Miller

While cartoon characters are brought to life by the animator and his assistants, these characters need a place to live, and it is up to the background stylist to provide that world.

One of animation's most renowned background stylists is Walt Peregoy, who designed the worlds for Disney's **101 Dalmatians, Sword in the Stone** and *Windwagon Smith*. For six years (1968-1973) he headed Hanna-Barbera's background department, styling such series as **The Perils of Penelope Pitstop, Three Musketeers, The New Adventures of Huck Finn, Dastardly and Muttley in Their Flying Machines, Where's Huddles?** and **Motormouse and Autocat**. He designed the environs for The **Lone Ranger** (1966) and **Emergency + 4**.

Peregoy's original designs have also encompassed architectural environments, sculptures, theme park shows and rides, such as Kraft's Land Pavilion and Kodak's "Journey Into Imagination" at Disney's EPCOT Center in Florida. He is currently designing backgrounds for Marvel Productions.

We discussed his career in a series of three interviews this past January at Sullivan Bluth Studios; the following is a condensation of these interviews.

How do you describe your job as a background stylist?

A background stylist is someone who is designing the ambiance, the environment, and the world in which moving drawn characters live. It's very important what that world is.

A background creates a world for animated characters. It's the ambiance. It's not an attempt to make (though it is, now) a live-action representational background that literally looks like a backdrop behind vaudeville animated characters. The characters are not in that particular world.

That's why a stylist is a stylist. You create a world that is compatible with the characters. It isn't that the world is believable because it is rendered realistically, it is believable because of the integrity, the sensitivity and the awareness of the designer.

But that doesn't exist any more, because producers have no empathy for it, and are not interested.

Originally the difference was Eyvind Earle, Ty Wong, Art Reilly and Mary Blair and myself. We're stylists. We're different artists who have different concepts. The concepts are different because the stories are different. Mary Blair wouldn't design a **Peter Pan** like **The Three Caballeros**. It's not simply because it's set in Latin America. It was a style. It was pastel, whimsical, charming; it was beautifully designed. It was believable.

People believed that Bambi lived in the forest. It wasn't a realistic forest; it was a watercolor forest background. But it fit. That's why it was a good style.

Dumbo was different. **Dumbo** was a hodgepodge of many styles, but it still worked, because primarily there was no fear, and there was no regimentation.

Today, I have the feeling they're trying to say, 'Boy, isn't that a great

background?' So what? A background isn't anything if it doesn't have characters on it. And it's doing nothing. A background is not something you hang on a wall. People do now, but that isn't the intent. And that's not what they're for. They're not illustrations. It's motion picture imagery, a world that is filmed. What happens to the artwork is quite special, if you understand it. You don't teach someone to paint this way for film, or use this kind of color. But that's what they do today.

It's important that the stylist be well-immersed in the animation film business. And if he has been in the business, he should have empathy for film. And painting backgrounds is a very very special and unique approach. It's not illustration. It's not painting pictures. It's creating ambiance and a world for the animated moving characters to live in, to work in. And the more integrity that the backgrounds have, the more integrity the film has. And it's obvious, the more integrity the background stylist has, the more integrity the film will have.

So the background person is a person working under the influence of the personality and style of the background stylist. He is as essential as the animator.

Where and when did you train to become an artist?

Well, I started when I was 17, before I finished my education. I got a job at Disney Studios with my portfolio, with the education that I had in the Saturday classes (at the Chouinard Art Institute). And this I'm very proud of. I worked for them for six months, in 1943. I quit because I thought it was a factory, and went to work as a cowboy. My first professional job was Disney, my second commission was when I was working as a cowboy, commissioned to do a portrait of the Pauli mare, which was a thoroughbred cutting horse who won the world champion cutting horse prize at the 1939 World's Fair.

I went back to Chouinard's for one semester. And because I didn't want to be a commercial artist, I studied with Don Graham there, who has always been a tremendous influence, a very fine teacher, very close to the animation business.

But then I left and went to Mexico, San Miguel Allende, to study, and it was under the influence of Sigueros, Diego Rivera, and Orozco, which I admire, and still do, very much.

I left after a year, came back to the States, worked for ten months in San Francisco and then the Redwood country, in service stations to get enough money to go to Paris, and went to Paris to study with Fernand Leger. Leger was a very significant artist. Fernand Leger was influenced by an obol (that's a shell from the First World War) which influenced his work for the rest of his life, as to the political, the social, and the economic content of his art.

That was the beginning of my art training.

But, I will say this: the real training is in the application. Drawing. Drawing, drawing, drawing! That is the real teacher.

Drawing in itself — the application, the motivation, and the intent — I find, even at this late date, are more than significant in training! Not just going to school and specializing. The wanting to be an artist is of great significance. And as I say, the conceptual part of why you want to be an artist, is how you become an artist, then how you apply yourself; not the schooling.

So now, back I go to work to make a living at Disney's, and this is some ten years later, at Disney's in 1951, on **Peter Pan**.

I started at the bottom again, as an inbetweener, with as much or more education than most, but no degrees. In other words, I quit high school to go to work for Disney in the 10th grade. So the education was very fortunate, again in hindsight. I'm very appreciative of apprenticing in the animation business with such artists as Marc Davis, Ken Anderson, and there was Ward Kimball, Bill Peet, Bill Tytla, Mary Blair. Others who were influential were Charlie Phillippi, Hugh Hennessy, Ricola Brun, Ty Wong, all very, very fine artists who had worked in the business and their work was very available, which was an education itself.

While you were at Disney, did the staff have any influence outside of the studio? In other words, were you looking at other studio cartoons? Was there any influence of those?

The influence, for me, wasn't Chuck Jones or Friz Freleng in the Warner Brothers cartoons. Nor was it Tom & Jerry or Lantz; none of those. The influence other than Disney's was the original UPA group, which at that time was impressive, and was the other side of the coin. They were extremely contemporary, avant garde. You could say they were really greatly influenced by the turn of the century, in international art design. That's one studio I never worked for. But I was influenced by them, not so much the others.

I worked at Disney for four years and became a cleanup artist in animation and then went upstairs (because the background department was on the second floor) to layout and background, and became a background painter, with Eyvind Earle on **Sleeping Beauty**. I was the first background artist to work right with Eyvind in the beginning of the film, and finished as a background painter, working through **Sleeping Beauty**.

Eyvind Earle was the stylist. He set the styles, and the background artists followed avidly, completely, his direction and his style. A background painter has to adapt himself and his talent and his ability, to whatever degree, to totally mimicking the style of the background stylist. The background stylist on **Sleeping Beauty** was Eyvind Earle. The world in which this film took place was Eyvind Earle's world.

And then I had the opportunity to be the background stylist on **101 Dalmatians**, which was a very exceptional opportunity, and was a film that the Disney people were deliberately asserting themselves to do.

They wanted to do something contemporary. So they got a contemporary story, and Walt bought it. Visually it was a breakthrough. Not as extreme as UPA. It wouldn't attempt to be, but it was a very fine film. And I was privileged to be the background stylist on it.

Chosen by?

By Ken Anderson. And that was a great opportunity. And these opportunities are rare.

On **101 Dalmatians**, my contribution was that world. There were other background painters who worked with me. **101 Dalmatians** was better than **Sleeping Beauty**, in this sense, because I had been a background painter, and there was neither the effort on the direction or on my part to make background artists slavishly follow my style. There are se-

quences in it that drift a little, but that's all right, because the impetus, the direction, the style of the film was set by me, and strongly enough by my design that the film itself stayed within the direction, but it's not boring! **Sleeping Beauty** is boring. Every scene is identical, every scene has detail, detail, detail, detail. It's all right, it's a good film, but — there is a difference.

***101 Dalmations** was the first feature to use xerography. How did this process affect how you worked?*

I had superb layout designers. We had fabulous artists like Erni Nordli, Ray Arogon, Dale Barnheart — I possibly missed a few, but these were young artists of my generation, and they were damn good. They contributed tremendously to the way backgrounds were. It affected the way I painted because I painted deliberately with the awareness that it was not necessary to go in and render the hell out of a doorknob, or a piece of glass, or a tree.

You can look at **Pinnochio** and it's a very fine film, but it's dated. Very dated. **101 Dalmatians** will never be dated. It's much like Broygel [sp?] of the 1500s. His paintings were contemporary as anything done today. It's not because of any other thing than he was a superb designer. It's only a two-dimensional surface.

In **101 Dalmatians,** the background painter did not highly render the background. I managed to keep Woolie [Reitherman] at bay on **Sword and the Stone,** but his attempt was to get the xerox lines against the backgrounds; it became a Ronald Searle affectation. There's no point in that. It's just superficial that the films look that way. **Aristocats** looks like a classically-painted Disney film with xerox lines on it. And of course it looks that way. **Jungle Book** is an absurdity in the other sense that it looks like **Aristocats** without the xerox line and it loses the "crutch." So what you have is neither fish nor fowl that way.

The stylist is the personality. The stylist's personality has as much to come into play in how he works with people, how he has a great deal to do with it.

Did Disney have a say so in the style?

Oh, no! No, this is one film that Walt didn't have any say-so in the style, and disliked it immensely after it was done. To my being let go after **Sword in the Stone** in 1965, after 14 years. You asked if he [had any influence]; no, he didn't. My wife's comment was, 'This isn't going to do you any good.' I said, 'Why?' She said, 'Because the paintings in the backgrounds look too much like you than it does Disney.' I take that as a compliment.

When I went on to style **The Sword in the Stone,** Walt did have something to say about the changing of style in the sense that he had Woolie Reitherman was becoming more authoritarian, and had more to say about what the style would be. There ceased to be a stylist after **Sword in the Stone**. I styled **Sword in the Stone** but as the film progressed, it started to drift backwards, back to what is now known as the classic Disney background style. I feel good about it, but it wasn't the film, background- wise, that **101 Dalmatians** was. Nor was it the film, background- wise, that *Windwagon Smith* was. Or films that I did afterwards when I left Disney, where I had complete ability to style the film.

In 1965, after I was fired from Disney, my first real key design job for background was with Ed Graham for *The Shooting of Dan McGroo*, which got an Academy nomination. It was a featurette. There was a very fine director, George Singer, and very fine layout men, Bob Dranko and George Cannata. Dranko and Cannata designed some fabulous characters and layouts. I was asked to style it so I took the layouts and the characters — and this is unusual because today animators would be incensed to allow a background painter to style the inking of their characters.

Seeing that it was a Robert Service poem that we called *he Shooting of Dan McGroo* in the Klondike time, I thought it was a perfect story and setting to take the layouts and ink them with a quill. With a sketchy line. Just not very accurately, not precisely, but sketched with a quill, with — I think — black ink, and then painted differently from **Dalmatians**, with more arbitrary color behind them. **Dalmatians** had a very Candensky-like (if you will) difference between it and *The Shooting of Dan McGroo*. I started on **Sword in the Stone** as painting with arbitrary color behind a xerox drawing; with *The Shooting of Dan McGroo* it was very fluid to paint behind it.

I inked the characters myself with this sketchy line. This was at a time when I knew Charley Phillipi's wife, Jane Phillipi, a Disney inker. She was working for Bill Hanna's sister, Connie. I went over and asked them if they would like to do this project, they would like to take and ink the characters as I had inked them, because I was going to ink the backgrounds. They were delighted. Jane was delighted; Mary Ann was delighted, several others were involved.

This you couldn't do today. Or if you did, you'd be suspect, and I don't know if there's that kind of talent around inking. This wasn't the **Pinocchio** or **Snow White** ink; this was an individual talent that each inking girl would use.

I went to work for Herb Klynn, who was the production manager at Format who produced *The Lone Ranger*,and he had been the production manager of UPA. It was [for] Saturday morning, but Herb Klynn was a very quality-oriented man.

Is there a difference between feature and television backgrounds? Are the demands the same?

Depending on what era you were in. In 1965 I started with Herb Klynn, and in 1966 that year we did *Lone Ranger*. As far as I'm concerned, as the background artist involved in the styling of the film, I could have taken any one of those pictures and it could have been released by Disney — I'm talking about the backgrounds — and it was absolutely the quality of any film put out by Disney.

On *The Lone Ranger*, I was hired at the conception of the production precisely because I had the experience from Disney's at that time, and because the man who actually had been working with me had no experience in putting this under the camera and putting it on the screen.

The Lone Ranger was an innovative series to do. It's innovative today: torn color paper with black Chinese marking pencil on cel. Powerful for Saturday morning, but you couldn't say the backgrounds were Saturday morning crap because they weren't. A full-length feature could be made this way and be extremely successful.

After *Lone Ranger* I was asked to come to Hanna-Barbera to head up their background department, and I believe

that was 1967. Being head of the background department also entailed being the background stylist. Prior to my being there, the backgrounds were *Flintstones* and they were all representational a la *Tom and Jerry*.

When I came on staff they had at the background department, at the time, *The New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Live actionanimation.

. . .Which was a new challenge for you, because you're integrating live action with the backgrounds.

As I remember, I had no big problem with it. Even though I did the keys on it and painted during the production, I had no problem because the animated part was animation and live action was live action. The mistake would try to be to integrate the animated background, and make the illustration an attempt at photographic realism. Then you'd have trouble. Because then you're trying to fool, and this doesn't work.

I was the stylist, and head of the background department, supervising backgrounds and styling. Although it was for Saturday morning, Saturday morning did not have a bad name at that time. It was animation production. I would style each series according to the story and the characters, and each one had a style. Some were *Three Musketeers* with the China marker, the grease pencil with painted background, grease pencil-on-cel (but not with torn paper and paint, as it was on *The Lone Ranger*). It was a strong adventure series. The backgrounds on this series had that ambiance, and this strength.

Motormouse was more lyrical, as was *Penelope Pitstop*. Color inked lines on cel rather than grease pencil, against painted backgrounds, which made a big difference. Totally different style.

You mentioned before the importance of the concept stage of a film or TV show. Could you tell me about your involvement as a stylist and how you worked with Hanna-Barbera and the network?

There's the ideal situation and there's the reality of the styling situation. Of course, in comparison to doing preproduction at Disney and a Hanna-Barbera Saturday morning series — the time for preproduction background styling was limited. The time spent is relatively short. But I'd say over a period of a month, maybe, at most. And I was given the layouts, and the layouts generally would follow a pattern. They didn't change too much. On something like *Three Musketeers*, which was a period piece, there were layout people who took reference, and for all intents and purposes, [the style] was representational.

Then there would be *Motormouse*, which would be total fantasy. So there was a possibility to go whimsical, and lyrical, and the layouts would have some of that, but then when it came to the styling, we had the prerogative to put it in the ambiance and the character of the story. Of course we would know what the story was, who the lead characters were, what their personalities were, what the story was in the script. And of course we'd read the script, which would give an indication.

The background department had the approval of Joe and Bill and Iwao Takamoto, who was creative head. When I first was there, I had a lot of freedom to do styling as I saw fit. But there was a time it had to be delivered by the next season, and there would be something like seventeen half-hour shows.

The styling, at first, didn't all have to look like *Scooby Doo*. And it didn't have to look like *The Flintstones*. Now it's changed since then. They have a *Flintstones* style and a *Scooby Doo* style and *The Jetsons* style. I am not surprised when young people say to me there is a strange conformity in all of the backgrounds. From studio to studio, they don't change. I would say, in recent times, styling doesn't really exist. It's just a matter of somebody doing key backgrounds, which are not styling, really. They're all similar and all representational, and that pretty well covers it. And also they're illustrations, rather than backgrounds painted for film. That's because in the business there are lots of artists who come from an illustration background and they don't have the experience of the studios in demand. Obviously an illustrator can fulfill, so that makes it possible for inexperience. A person to be called a background stylist, and it seems as though the demand is for

the sameness.

[At Hanna-Barbera] we produced a lot of work. The work was quality work. The backgrounds were as good as any backgrounds for any feature. We didn't go in to great embellishment — but they were for a series for Saturday morning. But they weren't cheap backgrounds. They weren't — in any way — limited, especially in their concept. There was a time when background painters didn't get bored, because each series was different.

I hired Dave Wiedman to do Dastardly & Muttley. A very fine designer. He had worked for the original UPA group. I said, 'Dave, this is your baby, you do it.' And he didn't believe it. I said, 'Yeah, you can do it. Go ahead.' And he did. And it was very different, very handsome, a quality background, artwise, film.

Gradually, over a period of some six years, Hanna-Barbera fell back in, because of their production scheduling, and because of the advent of animation being sent to [overseas] production houses. Originally Spain, and then Australia, then Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Poland. Now Russia. Now mainland China.

But why did Hanna-Barbera want it to be different at one point and then go back to being interchangeable? Was it economics?

No. Bill Hanna had set up these production houses all over the world, and so they finally got themselves a man who limited himself to the device in formula painting and sent keys that were absolutely very easy to reproduce. So then, when you got a production house that once they did one film, two films, the more they could keep on painting, with no great problem, with great ease. So they changed, not deliberately, but the whole industry went this way.

Today, the reason why all backgrounds are interchangeable is because, first, there are no background stylists; they're just background painters. And even people who call themselves key background [painters], I've run into any number of them who have never painted backgrounds for a feature, much less anything else, and they're doing what they call keys, and all they are are illustrations, and most of them have a great facility for copying.

A designer is not somebody who excels in mimicry. There's a great deal of difference.

Before you do a drawing, your attitude toward the drawing is absolutely essential. It's very difficult for a young person to perceive this because they're just attempting to mimic and please somebody else. Fine. This is a learning process. But, in the animation business, because it is a visual arts medium, everybody's personality comes through.

In other words, we live in windowless houses, and [work for] almost faceless people, and I would venture to say that producers lose sight of the fact that they can control all of the artists, that they can get the film they want. Oh, they do. But they also get the kind of film that is produced in that manner. All that matters is how the film is produced, are reflected in the finished product. There's no such thing as making a film that is detached and removed from the personalities of everybody who's working on it.

I know now there are individuals doing background keys who have never even painted backgrounds. This scene is visible in the finished product.

In the late 1970s I was at WED. I was hired by — interestingly enough — the son of [Stephen] Bosustow, who was the head of UPA. His son Nicolas hired me specifically to do a film called *To Try Try Again and Succeed*, and I was asked to do it because he wanted something different, something original, something creative — then proceeded to tell me how to do it. Which is normal. I proceeded to tell them, 'Well, then, you get somebody else.' [They said,] 'No, we want you to do it.' 'Okay,' I said, 'then I do it.'

So that film I'm very proud of. I got design credits on that one, and they didn't call me the background stylist because I designed the characters; I posed the characters in each scene; I laid it out; I painted it; and so I designed it. The film was very good because it was a Sam Weiss-directed film; he was very good. [Bill] Littlejohn had never worked for Walt, but was a hell of an animator. He didn't change my characters.

Again, the story: And this had no xerox lines. No grease pencil. An entirely different style. Different than *The Shooting of Dan McGroo*. And it is, in my estimation, very fine. These eagles really flew. The little eagle, when he's pushed off the cliff, he really falls. Again, it's the integrity of the people, the director, and the animator, the men who wrote the story, and the voice was Orson Welles. You put this all together, you get a fine film.

If background styles are interchangeable today, with little or no difference, do you see any change?

No. No. I don't see any change. But that's not unusual. Because I don't think there's an individual who necessarily has the capacity, the experience, and the sensitivity. I think it takes a very special person to style an animated film. But that person isn't a person who could get financial backing. That kind of person doesn't influence bankers, or producers, or large studios. They think of the artist as a hybrid individual. And they're right.

But if we didn't have those individuals 30 years ago we wouldn't have had the film we had then. And I can't imagine what they would look like now. They probably would have looked just like they do now, which is over a longer period of time, because they're absolutely interchangeable. Absolutely stereotyped. And this is not going to change, unless there — out there that I don't know of — is an entrepreneur who has the desire to do so. And that producer cannot be the one who does it. He cannot call himself a producer that he or she just decides they will make the decisions, because they don't know. That's not very likely, a person with money. . . .

So I don't know yet, but I do know that it can be done. *Don Quixote* could be a fantastic film. There are people to make it, but they truly would need directors now. They need direction. They need motivation. They need security. . . .to produce something of great significance, beauty, pathos, joy, all of that. I don't know. I just don't know.

I speak with great frustration, and with a lot of anxiety, and a lot of disappointment. And I'm 65; that's not old, but it also isn't young. It leaves very little time for miracles, or for that wonderful shot at directing that all of a sudden comes out of nowhere and all of a sudden you've been given the opportunity to do a fantastic piece of work.

It's happened to me on rare occasions, but that has passed, and it wasn't in

animation. It was in a theme park. Even in a theme park, that was fantastic work that I did for EPCOT. It won't ever be done in another theme park. The work that I did was all mine. It's very obvious that it's an individual's work, but there's no names.

They don't have a credits list.

That's right. So that means it's impossible for the artist to survive. Which is a worse-than-primitive commentary on contemporary art, because art appears where it appears. The fact that some of the best art that I've done in my life is at EPCOT, an amusement park, doesn't mean that it isn't damn good. But it's hidden, you see.

You mean no credit.

No credit. I've talked to young people, and they mention the various series that they enjoy, but you would never have known that; I would never have known that, while I was working there. Nobody ever showed any appreciation for what I did.

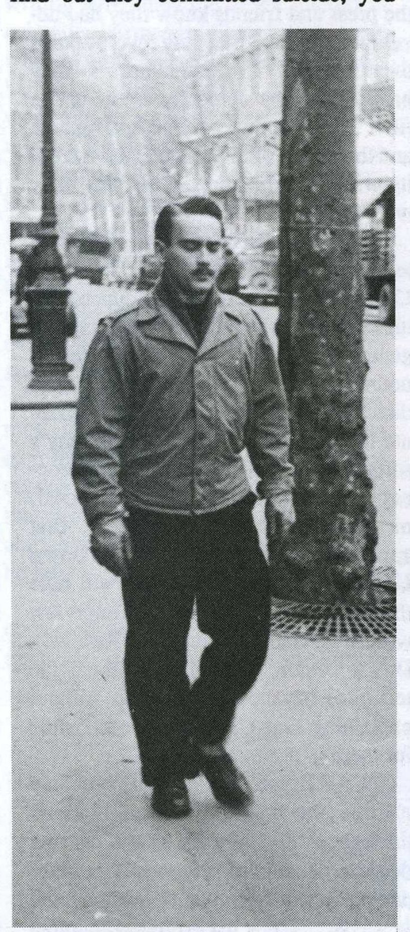
Are you talking about the people in the studio or the fans?

The people in the studio. This is a curious part of this business. I did *The Shooting of Dan McGroo*, which received Academy nomination. Some 20 years later, I was in Germany [working for MS Films]. An animator who had recommended me to Ed Graham came up to me and said, 'You know, Walt, I have a letter that Ed Graham wrote me, thanking me for introducing you to him.' My reaction was, 'Why didn't he write me?' Why didn't he thank me? He got an Academy nomination; I didn't. I styled the picture. It's still unique. I've done so many films that they're still innovative 30 years later.

The last film that I designed was *To Try Try Again and to Succeed*. The producer never once really thanked me. I designed a poster for him and failed to sign it, and I had to ask him for a couple of them. He didn't put my name on the brochures that were showing at the museum, where a friend of mine saw it and said, 'Oh, Walt, I saw your film. I really liked it. It's very nice. Would you like the program? Well, your name isn't on it.' I talked to Nick Bosustow and I said, 'Why the hell didn't you put my name on it? You got Littlejohn's name [on it], the animator, he deserves it, and Sam Weiss, Orson Welles. But the guy who designed the film, his name wasn't on it.'

So, how can it propagate? How can a film company, through animated film, propagate themselves, if nobody's curious enough to go back and find out who did it? And what's behind them?

Why did **101 Dalmatians** look like **101 Dalmatians**? Why did it look that way? It wasn't as simple as names. It was because of a lot of people, yes. Very fine artists. Not just me. But the people that know them ignore the credits. If somebody wants to produce a film why don't they look up those names? Some of them find out they committed suicide, you



know. Great talents. But they don't care.

It's not that they don't care; they're so stereotyped even in their own concepts. They're all saying, 'Aw, they're not making Fantasias anymore.' Who the hell wants to? I can make *Don Quixote* not better, but something so different from **Fantasia** but so wonderful it would blow your mind. But they don't want to see it.

My whole intent is to try to influence the industry with innovative, expressive films with the state of the styling of the backgrounds, but it's applicable to everything. The backgrounds, as we've said before, are the world in which the stories take place.

And the fact that they're so mundane and ordinary obviously means that the characters—no matter how they're styled or how they're designed, fantasy characters or live characters — they exist in a very ordinary world.

Would you blame this on the network or on the studio? When you design a world for a cartoon, doesn't the network have approval first?

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Originally, networks took *The Flintstones* [from the advertising agencies], and were very successful, and Saturday morning became bigger and bigger and bigger, and yes, networks became more powerful. But that was only because Hanna-Barbera and gradually other studios relinquished their right, because of the Nielsen ratings.

It's the sort of thing that you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. It isn't that you can put the blame on the networks; you can also blame the lack of backbone in the animation business.

Jay Ward did *Bullwinkle*. Nobody told him how to do *Bullwinkle*. Nobody told Herb Klynn at Format Studios how to do *The Lone Ranger*. But in the advent of production houses and network profit-taking gave the prerogative to the networks.

It's not unlike children. One blames the other. The networks would say, well you don't have the talent. The producers say, well, the networks make us do it. The background stylist who isn't capable can say, well, the producer won't let me. Everybody blames everybody else.

But it's my opinion that the right to creative integrity has been relinquished.

I'm convinced this industry will survive, but it won't do anything of any real value.

Unless?

Unless they quit looking at it as a product. Why do people say 'Saturday morning quality'? Why should Saturday morning quality be bad? Can anybody answer that? Why should it be bad?

Censoring the Reporters?

Are you really finding out all the animation news?

by Karl Cohen

With the recent sucess of animation at the box offices across the US and with The Simpsons holding their own against Cosby, things are looking good for the animation industry - or so it seems. If things are so good, then why has this reporter noted so many problems with censorship in recent months?

There are many forms censorship may take in the animation industry. One form is the suppression of information by the industry. Another form is created by publications not wanting to offend advertisers or lose subscribers. A realistic form is self-imposed to avoid the embarrassment of certain people. There is also the problem of being given false information and until recently there was official censorship of films because of their political message in Eastern Block countries. Even Canada censored a cartoon recently.

It may or may not come as a surprise that the largest producer of animation in the US is also constantly suppressing "toon" news. Disney seems to want the world to believe that they personally create everything that is Disney. Often work is created for them by outside developers or producers and most if not all of their contracts with others stipulate that the outside companies cannot release news of what they are doing for Disney. Employees must treat the work as top secret.

Two examples of this are recent projects for Disney by Industrial Light and Magic and Pixar. ILM's computer division spent two years developing some of the visuals for the "Body Wars" attraction at Disney World is Florida. Disney doesn't give credit at the ride so visitors probably assume Disney developed all of it. Nobody has written about all the work that went into the exceptional attraction.

Pixar recently developed the Computer Assisted Paint System (CAPS) for Disney. CAPS worked overtime to ink and paint the entire **Rescuers Down Under** feature. The artists gave the machine their pencil drawings and CAPS did the rest. It does the ink and paint, composites art with backgrounds, does amazing multiplane work, and more. The final composite digital image was scanned onto 35mm film. The finished results look like they were made by hand. The image quality is excellent.

Pixar's staff worked with Disney on CAPS for five years, but they couldn't let the press and friends know they had developed a system that may revolutionize theatrical and TV animation. Disney barely gave the company credit in the film. They mentioned the company name and the names of four people in the credits without explaining as to why they were there.

The first official mention of the system came on July 25, 1991, when Ed Catmul, Pixar's president, announced that his company was producing a computer generated feature for Disney. He announced that John Lasseter will write and direct it and that Buena Vista will distribute it. He also said that the company's software has replaced the laborious process of hand coloring Disney's two-dimensional animation and that the first application had been **The Rescuers Down Under**. Readers of ***Animato*** will note that in Jim Fanning's issue 21 interview with Mike Gabriel, director of **Rescuers Down Under**, Gabriel talks about the technical advances in the film without explaining that CAPS was responsible for them.

CAPS type systems will probably change the way animation is done throughout the industry in the coming decade. Other companies are now introducing their own computer ink and paint systems. They may eliminate most projects being done overseas. The computer can do complex animation compositing quickly so expect more Roger Rabbit type projects as well as works that combine 2D with 3D animation. Also expect the addition of new lighting techniques, ray tracing, and other details.

These two examples of censorship are probably the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Disney. Other cases exist. Pacific Data Images was mentioned in an article by Jim Henson as working on his Muppet attraction in Florida. They produced 70mm images of their computer generated character Waldo for the Muppet studio attraction. Although Henson had been interviewed on the project, the staff at PDI can only say they did "something" for the theme park.

Other companies besides Disney try to manage news. Two exceptional half hour TV shows are now sitting on network shelves that you will probably never see or hear about. Colossal Pictures did an exceptional Betty Boop special that captures the spirit of the early surreal Betty Boops. The work belongs to King Features and CBS, and until it airs it is difficult to write about this great project. CBS has announced several times that it will air the show (early 1990, Fall 1990, etc.) but CBS refuses to allow any feature articles on the show until an exact air date is set. I know of another project that also sits on a shelf and the people who worked on it are asked not to talk to the press about it.

As a reporter, I've been asked by companies not to report on items for reasonable but slightly silly reasons. A state lottery asked that there be no publicity about a computer generated animated commercial because they didn't want voters to know how much money was being spent to promote gambling. What difference does it make if the lottery commission spent $25,000 or $250,000 on an ad when air buys, billboards, and print campaigns cost millions each month?

An all to common problem occurred in the case of a national spot that was fantastic but was made just before the sposnor or agency had a change of command. The new team didn't want to be associated with the creation of the old bosses. The ad was aired but the company that produced it couldn't let Ad Age or any other trades know who did it due to their client's wishes that there be no publicity. Too bad. It was an amazing piece of stop motion animation and it could have gone on to win an award or two. the

crazy thing about the ad is that the group that suppressed the news of the first ad recently had the same company produce a sequel that is being promoted in the trade papers as an exciting new work by...

Self censorship is sometimes necessary. Papers often carry items about people being appointed to jobs within the industry but except when it comes to information about radio or TV news people, you rarely hear about anyone who has departed the company. Some jobs are new, but many hiring mean somebody else has been fired, promoted, left for a better job or is gone for other reasons. Only part of the story is normally covered.

A recent scandal in the L.A. animation world is another story that wasn't covered although a lot of people knew about it. Nobody wanted to further hurt or embarrass the people who were ripped off. Somebody went to jail and insurance covered some of the loss.

Censorship of films exists in some countries for political reasons. At the Ottawa Animation festival last year people were talking about a TV spot John Weldon did for the Canadian Internal Revenue Service. It aired once or twice and then someone found reason to object to it. All prints were destroyed. Nobody seemed to know why.

At the same festival there were two programs of shorts that had been banned from exhibition in eastern Block nations before the recent change in political events. Until now only the Jan Svankmajer shorts in the program have been exhibited in the US.

As a member of the working cartoon press, I'm constantly sent press releases about new films and other activities. This is news sent out to make companies look good and not all of it is true. It pays to check information.

Someone recently confessed that a business item about the gross income of a production house was greatly exaggerated in an article that appeared a few years ago. It was inflated by several million dollars to make the company look great.

Recently I called a prominent voice actress to ask about a production her name was associated with. The reply was that a demo was made but the project fell through. The news release that stated that the show was in production was false and the actress was mad that the producer had sent out the item.

Last summer a cable network that should have known better released a new story about a project they were doing. A tentative air date was announced. The show was being produced by an outside production house and the company didn't get a signed contract for the project until after the origibal air date had passed. The show aired 6 months later.

There are many hard stories that animation press should cover. Nobody is writing about how the recent interest in animation has made millions for the people who own the rights to license products but hasn't done much for the average worker in the industry except to provide more or less steady employment.

Animators who work on your favorite TV shows and commercials are not getting rich. If and when the national interest in animation slows many will be laid off. New York, the birthplace of the animation industry, has had a depressed employment picture for animators for several years.

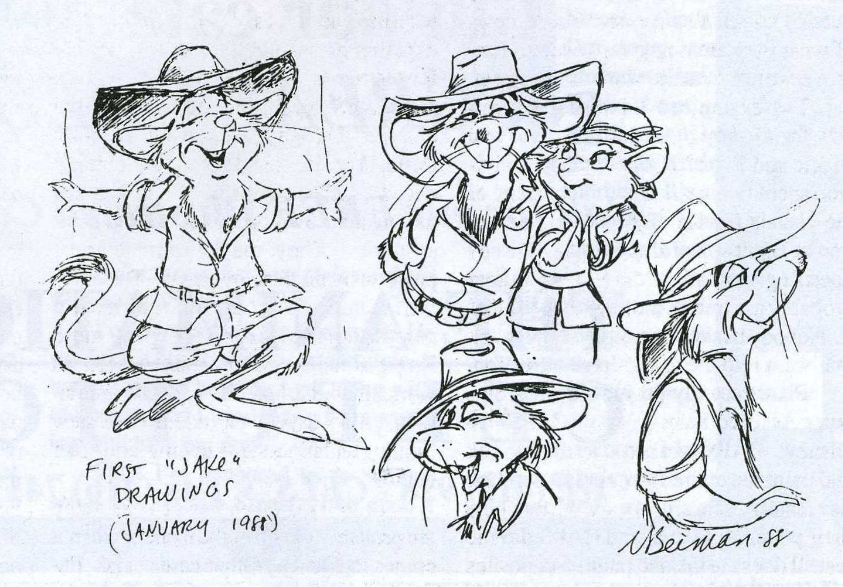
A story I'd like to write but know most magazines wouldn't touch is an expose on the dubious value of limited edition animation cels. The problem is that animation art dealers sell these cels and advertise in the magazines that would be interested in running these ads.

To get my thoughts into prints, I contacted the *Wall Street Journal* and explained in a proposal that the limited edition art had no historic value. The fine print sometimes even says they are reproductions. I pointed out that some prints are mass produced using silkscreens, that Disney and Clampett items are not signed by their creators, that animation materials are not archival and can deteriorate, and that buyers may find it hard or impossible to resell work for what they paid for it. The works may be beautiful but they are nothing more than overpriced souvenirs produced for the high profits involved.

The Journal later published a first rate story about buying and selling original animation production art. the article warned that nitrate cels can decompose. At the end of the long article they mentioned that limited edition cels were "shunned by most collectors." They then quoted Jerry Beck as saying the works lack artistic value and therefore "will never be worth as much as a genuine production cel."

Beck also said a production cel "is a piece of a movie, but a limited edition cel is nothing but a piece of plastic with paint on it."

This may be the first time anything has been written about the cons as well as the pros of buying animation art. A gallery director who sells both limited editions and originals surprised me by saying he had duplicated the article and sent it to his clients. On the other hand, the president of a company that makes limited edition art was reported to be quite upset with the article.



The Surreal World of Sally Cruikshank

In which animator Steve Segal meets with our hero and discusses movie titles, the animation industry, and cat vomit.

by Steve Segal

Sally Cruikshank has been well known as an underground animator whose films such as *Quasi at the Quackadero, Make Me Psychic* and *Face Like a Frog* have endeared her to a large cult following. Her surreal films also attracted the notice of Steven Spielburg who hired her to do an animated sequence for the **Twilight Zone** movie. She has since done many animated title sequences for feature films and animation for **Sesame Street.**

When I first drove to her San Fernando home she shares with her husband Jon Davison (**Robocop, Airplane**), I noticed the her car's bumper sticker: "This Vehicle Protected by RoboCop." Inside were many colorful sculptures mae from styrofoam packing blocks. She patiently waited while I fumbled with a faulty microphone until we finally got started.

What have you been doing lately?

Nothing, really. I haven't done anything in a year.

I saw a commercial you did - a Kool Aid commercial.

No, I didn't.

You didn't! Well, someone is copying your style.

I know! That goes on and they never call me...

The most recent thing I've been doing is trying to design some stuff for Levis commercials that I didn't get. That would have been nice, but it didn't happen.I was hoping to be able to direct that Dr. Suess feature, but that didn't happen.

A feature?

They're doing aanimated feature at Tri-Star based on his book ***Oh, The Places You'll Go***. When I went in for the interview I saw all his storyboard sketches for it which were really fantastic to see.



It does seem that your style would fit very well with his.

I've always liked his work a lot. He has been a big influence. At the time, it was also good because I get along with old people and I would have been working with him, but now...

Then I'm supposed to be writing songs for **Sesame Street**. I've done a number of pieces for them in the last two years. I've done about six different ones. They're all nice little musical pieces.

One's called "Islands of Emotions", and there's "in and Out Crowd" and, oh, "Beginning, Middle and End" and "Part of a Whole" and a series of numbers. But that's a deceptively simple project. Songwriting.. I'm discovering songwriting is not one of the things that's a hidden talent of mine.

Just writing songs, or doing animation?

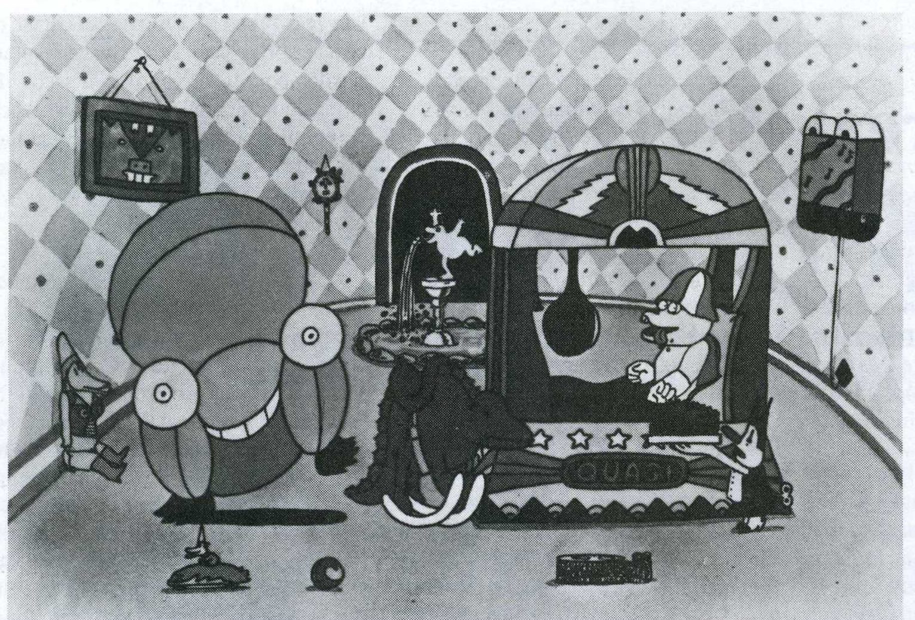
Well, in the past, other people have written the songs and then I've done the animation, and I wasn't that crazy about the tracks they sent me so the producer said I could start from the very beginning and write the songs and record and produce the music and do the whole thing, but so far I haven't had a lot of luck on writing songs for **Sesame Street**. That's one of things I'm doing, and I'm fooling around with another short, but unless I can get unexpected backing for it, I won't be doing it. I was writing on that this morning. It's an idea I've had for awhile. It has Anita in this cartoon: "Mean Mall," about a mall of pain.

Like a shopping mall?

Like a shopping mall, where everything is pain.

Mall of pain almost seems like redundant.

Yeah, I know, I know, that's true. Depends on how you like shopping. Other than that, well, not that recently, I finished movie titles for **Madhouse**.



Is that the one with John Laroquette?

Yes, and Kirstie Alley. I really, really loved the way that turned out. It was my favorite movie title. They got me a song that I liked. I didn't animate to the music but I directed the animation to the music, which is the thing I most like doing.

Directing or doing to music?

Doing to music, working to a track, I really love that if I like the track. It's my favorite thing.

*That's interesting, because I can only think of **Face Like a Frog**.*

Only one part of that had where the track came first. In **Make Me Psychic** the track came first, actually, but. . .

But that seems more like background music.

Yeah, it was, it was, except there's one song in there. I really have strong feelings about that, about working to music, and I've wanted to do it, and I've tried, probably not hard enough, to get into music videos.

*Who wrote the song in **Make Me Psychic**?*

Al Dodge wrote that. He was one of the Cheap Suit Serenaders, Robert Crumb's backup band.

*How did you decide to use Danny Elfman for the soundtrack for **Face Like a Frog**?*

He was in a band where they used to run **Quasi at the Quackadero** as a warm up act. I forget how I was introduced to him.

I guess you did some music videos, didn't you?

Yeah, but you don't want to get into that. . .

Yeah, that's also the common view. . .Plus the music that I really like isn't what they're paying money for for music videos.

There you go. There are a lot of dishonest people in all phases in the business, but it seems like the greatest degree in that field.

I've heard that. That would really drive me up the wall.

I've been screwed so many times. It seems that you're well known enough that you could get something, maybe not, maybe I'm being naive.

Naive. I'm agreeing...I don't know, it's a really tough field to get people to believe in, and especially to get anybody to take any risk in. I mean, with *The Simpsons*, they're saying now, "they took such a risk." But they didn't take a risk, really. I mean, here was an established comic strip, he'd already built up his audience as the comic strip.

The established comic strip would be "Life in Hell."

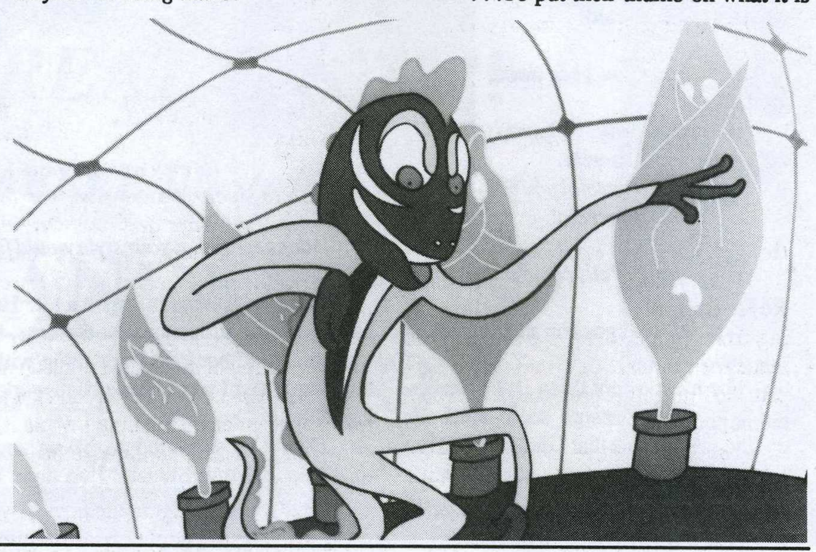
Yeah, but, you know, it's a style, it's a look, and it's all over the country. And then. . .*The Tracey Ullman Show* is more where they took a risk. . .But, you see, they'd already tested the water by the time that that came out. And **Roger Rabbit**, they said, oh, they took such a risk, well, that took eight years to get produced.

It probably was a big risk.

That was a big risk. That's true, it was.

In their defense, it probably was a risk. I mean, now you look back and say, that's cool, that's fine, and everybody wants to watch it. But animation has not been that good and not been well received. It's usually not done well. It's one of these fluky things where there's no criteria for what makes the quality element. Matt Groening has some magical ingredient that makes that work as far as I'm concerned. So, that drives producers crazy because there's no way to. . .

. . .To put their thumb on what it is



that it's got to get it again.

When they started The Tracey Ullman Show *there were two animated segments.*

Yes, M.K. Brown...

So, actually that's really smart, that's a great way to test the waters, make little shorts.

Oh yeah, I know. That's what I was thinking with this short. I thought I would try to sell it. For awhile it looked like Disney was going to be putting out shorts before all their features. There was a lot of hoopla about that, but it appears that that doesn't seem to be happening. That's what I was thinking if people were really unsure about my work for a feature, maybe if somebody were willing to produce a short which isn't that expensive, to test the water. If it went out in a big enough distribution pattern...

OK, let me ask you about that "feature" thing. Is that a goal of yours, to do a feature?

Not as much anymore as it had been. I mean, I've devoted a terrific amount of time, paper, and energy to writing and developing two features fully, with storyboards, scripts, and backup materials. In **Quasi's Cabaret**, you know, I had a three minute trailer. I would completely turn around if somebody started to seem like something could happen, but it hasn't seemed that way. . .and you get sick of just going to all those meetings. I don't know. . .I go to a meeting and they'll say, "Well, we really want to hear your ideas," and so you tell them, "That's it."

The one feature I most wanted to do was sort of undercut by **Roger Rabbit**. All the time they were trying to get **Roger Rabbit** produced, I was trying to get an animation/live action combination produced.

Was this "Love That Makes You Crawl"?

Yes.

I met somebody who'd read that and thought that it was hilariously funny.

I really like it, but I thought that once **Roger Rabbit** was a hit that I'd be hearing from people since it definitely had made the rounds. . .but that didn't happen. So I'm feeling pretty negative about animation.

You know, I have to ask this, and I hope I don't step on any toes or anything, but has your husband gotten involved at all in the production of your films?

No, not really. On **Face Like a Frog**, he bankrolled.

I mean in getting a feature made.

No, we've kept that separate.

That's not a bad idea. Usually in Hollywood you take anything you can get like everybody else does but I guess some things get made on their merit. I guess that's pretty cynical!

I think a lot of things get made on their merit but whether their merit is merit in somebody else's eyes is unknown. I think a lot of things are based on somebody thinking it was good. I don't think nepotism runs that deeply. I mean, bad judgement may not be merit but somecbody thinks there is.

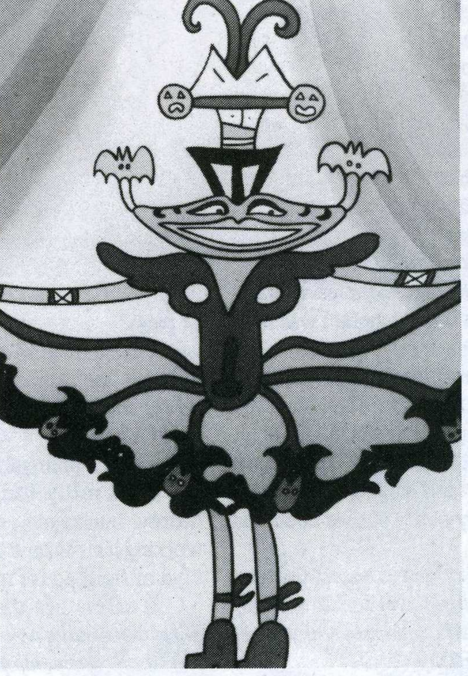
I tried it once, and I don't know...

You mean going around and trying to sell things?

It's pretty degrading.

It is. And how many times can you keep doing that? And you run into people who really like that and they're all enthusiastic and unless you're talking to the head of the company, forget it! You're just going to be shuffling in and out of doors for years.

That seems what we hear about. A lot of successful work is because they went from studio to studio to studio. I know that was the case with ***Star Wars*** *and also* ***Driving Miss Daisy*** *- they took it to every studio and everyone said "No one wants to see this kind of film."*



Persistence can pay off. But there's a certain dating of material. I think about "Love that Makes You Crawl" and it was really appropriate at the time I wrote it.

Well, let's talk about something a bit more positive.

I really like doing movie titles. I've done **Ruthless People**, **Mannequin**, **Lover Boy** and **Madhouse**. It's fun to do because producers tend to be very enthusiastic about what you do. It's not like doing a commercial where they browbeat you until you hate the project, you hate the people you're working for, you hate the work you're doing - you know how it is with commercials.

There's a lot of pressures.

And any type of crazy thing you do has to be tamed down.

What commercials have you done?

Just about none. Candilicious. That's it. Aside from ones I did in the '70s when I worked at Snazelle but those really didn't look like my style. Candelicious was fun to work with. I had a good time doing it.

What is candilicious?

It's aproduct that's no longer available!

Did you have any educational background in animation or did you just pick it up on your own?

I went to Smith College and majored in art and in my senior year I made an animated film on my own. Then I studied one semester at the San Fransisco Art Instituteand took a class with larry Jordon, but basically I'm self taught. The Preston Blair book was where I learned most of what I learned.

You mentioned Snazelle...When you were at Snazelle Films did you get to do your own work?

Nothing but my own! Every couple of years we'd get a commercial.

And you'd have complete control over it?

Not of the commercials, but we got them so rarely, so the rest of the time I had this extraordinary job situation where I was able to do my own work and get paid as if I was doing something! That was when I did all the Quasi films. They

sponsored me. I came to work, went upstairs and came home at the end of the day just like a real job.You did a lot of commercials.

I did a lot. Some of it was great. We did a lot of public service spots. They were definitely low budget. But when did the bigger clients, it was a nightmare. There is a change every day. . .

. ..and compromises and just a watering down. Movie titles aren't like that except sometimes you don't have enough time. In **Mannequin,** we didn't have enough time plus we had to carry the storyline through the animated titles to get from ancient Egypt to the modern times and show that she had met all these people in history. So that was a little difficult. In **Lover Boy** was really easy. Director Joan Michelin-Silver was enthusiastic. That was the onbe I was least involved with because I was having a baby. **Madhouse** is my favorite; that was a lot of fun. Just the title alone. . .

How do you feel about the film?

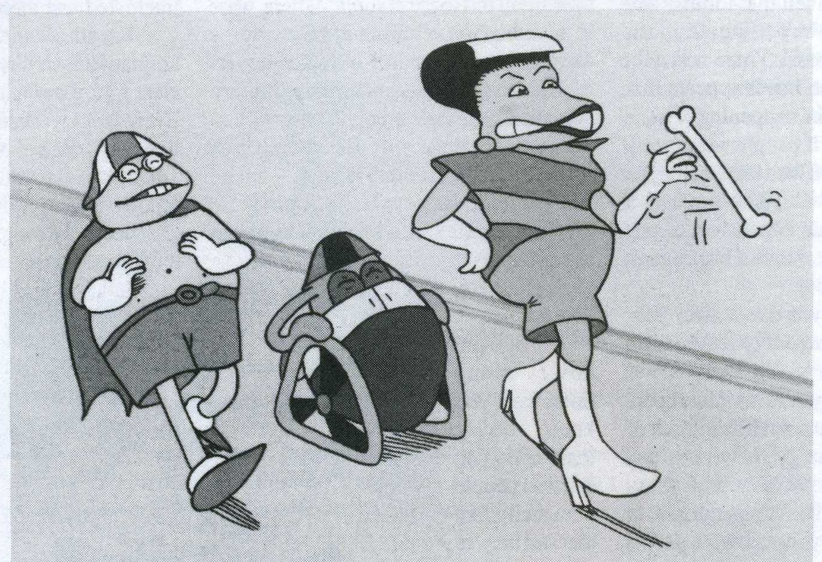
I liked **Madhouse** a lot. I thought it was hysterical. . .and nobody else liked it. It had some very funny scenes about cat vomit.

It got a lot of bad reviews. In fact, most of those films were not well received, and I can't remember any mention of the credits.

We got a review in *People* magazine on **Lover Boy** and they said the credits were the best thing about the movie, and the *New York Times,* which liked **Madhouse,** really praised the titles - but *Variety* said "cheap animated titles." I was trying something different that was really UPA-like. I wasn't doing it to be cheap, I was just curious trying to carry out two color schemes on characters where usually I like color so much that on any character I have sometimes ten or twelve colors so I wanted to try just taking just two colors - black and white - and working down on a character and see how it worked. A character was just green and black, but to the reviewer that must have looked cheap because it was just monochromatic whereas to me, it was experimental for myself. And I was very pleased with how it worked out. I liked what the animators did.

You directed all of these?

Yes.



And did you do any animation on any of them?

I did animation on **Ruthless People.** I do all the animation on the *Sesame Street* stuff because the budgets are so small I have to. I would rather not be doing all the animation. I like the directing and I really like the ideas. I love hearing music and getting concepts and working it all out and then at that point it's kind of finished for me.

*It seems like there are a lot more animated credits now, and I haven't even seen those you mentioned except for **Ruthless People**. I worked on **Earth Girls are Easy** and **Honey I Shrunk the Kids**. . .*

Oh, and there was **Who's That Girl?** and **Uncle Buck** with John Candy.

And occasionally you see some blockbuster that has characters that look like The Beatles *TV series running around doing something animated. . .*

Unfortunately, that's probably going to dry up the field again. It gets to be ordinary and it appears to accompany unfunny comedies to try to jelly up the audience. It does warm an audience up. I would like to do a serious movie. It doesn't look too hard.

I think you could do that. Although with your style and your background it would be hard to sell people on it.

I would really love it if there were a market for animated shorts.

Well, there's the Tournee and the Festival of Animation. . .

They're not enough to justify the time and cost of production.

I think some people are making money at it, like Bill Plympton who puts things out really fast.

I keep thinking if I simplified my style it would be possible to do shorts and not feel plowed under by the work load. But my style is so compulsively filled and I don't really like simplicity.

It's not as much fun to do simple work. It's just drudgery. I guess my solution has been working on the computer.

Are you actually doing inbetweens on the computer?

Whatever I can get away with. It's very hard to program the computer to do inbetweens, so we did a lot of straight ahead animation, drawing every drawing. But because you're saving it onto a big animation file, you don't have to keep track of paper or paint or film. . And you can color film and once you get all the colors painted and can say "You know, that color would look a lot better" when you see them in context with each other moving and you can change them. . .

But it's electronic color.

It is. It's not nearly as appealing. And if it ends up on tape. . .

. . .it's going to be electronic color anyhow.

Right. Now tell me something about the sculptures. . .

In the last couple of years I have been doing a lot of sculptures and painting styrofoam but it's getting harder to find! They're phasing it out because it's so bad for the environment. It's also archivalry perfect because it never deteriorates.

You're using the packing stuff. . .

Yeah, I pick it out of garbage cans. I'm concerned about the environment as much as anyone, but this is already garbage. Actually, it all started when I was intrigued by this idea and I thought I was going to make a lot of money making affordable sculpture. I started out with cardboard and I thought "This would be so great!" You'd get a place like Paper Moon or Oz would sell these things like giant cereal boxes. You'd buy them and they'd be all silk screened and you'd take them home and foild them and stick them on your wall and there's your sculpture. So I started doing that but cardboard is yucky material to work with. I had made very weak feeble attempts to make a gallery show in the past, where you go to one person and they'd say "no" and you'd wait another two years. . .

You don't thrive on rejection.

No, rejection doesn't really bother me that much. I've been through so much rejection that it just makes me aware that I have to go down my own road. It doesn't depress me is what I'm saying but it doesn't make me want to run out and try to convince people. So anyway, I've been making sculptures out of styrofoam and I don't know what to do with them. .

There's less pressure if you're not trying to go to a gallery because you're not trying to figure out what they're looking for and doing that. It's just more of a joyful feeling of doing it. So what if it isn't accepted by the gallery, it's still the same piece of work. Except now the room's getting crowded.

Do you sell your cels?

Yes, I have. That is probably the single most lucrative aspect of my films is selling the cels. At Animation Plus, but they moved to Chicago. . .they sold a couple but i was asking big prices.

I still have a box of ***Futuropolis*** *cels but they don't sell because nobody's heard of it. There's some beautiful stuff I'd love to buy. But back to animation. . .Do you actually go out and get jobs?*

No, the jobs come to me. I haven't really gone out looking. Mostly because of **Ruthless People.**

That's probably the most successful work you've done.

Well, it certainly wasn't **Lover Boy!**

Yeah, I saw that in a video store and didn't know anything about it. I should rent all these and make a "Sally Cruikshank title festival!"

Just the animation!

What would you make if you had an infinite budget?

"The Love That Makes You Cry."" or else that thing I did for Marv Newland.

Animajam?

No, it was a feature he was trying to get going called "Toons Times Nine." He started it before "toon" was such a big word out of Roger Rabbit. There were nine animators all around the world he hired to do storyboards of different versions of the Faust legend, in any way you wanted to interpret it at all!

I thought that was the best written and weirdest thing I ever did. I would love to do it. It was really funny. He couldn't get funding for that, not surprisingly because it was nine shorts with an unlikely subject matter.

Animation is bad enough to raise money for, but shorts!

People figure "they'll never have the attention span!"

So what's the plot for "Love That Makes You Crawl"?

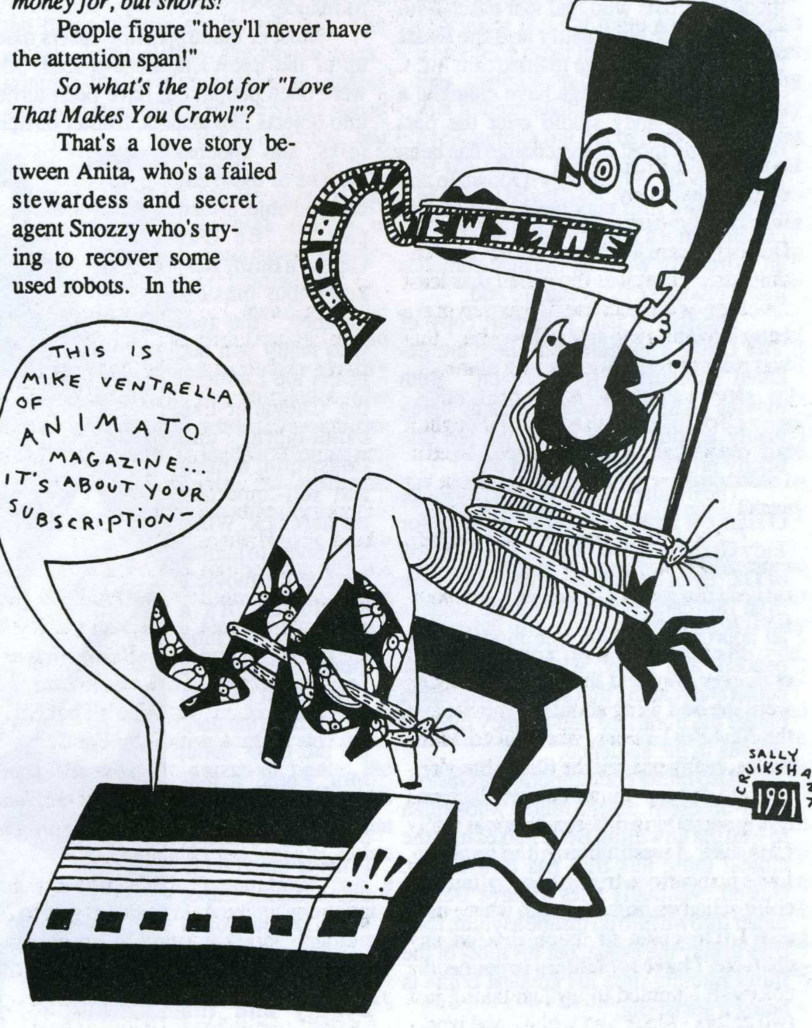
That's a love story between Anita, who's a failed stewardess and secret agent Snozzy who's trying to recover some used robots. In the process he joins a secret society and they go around the world on a sex tour on the Titanic II. It's fairly racy by animation standards.

How much of it would have been live action?

Not much - about twenty minutes. Joe Dante was interested in directing the live action part. That script has been touring around and people are always interested and then scared of it.

I read all thesearticles about how animation is in this great new stage and I can't figure out what age am I? (laughs) Even though there are more opportunities, the thinking is just as rigid and unwilling to see anything else possibly working. And then I look at the **Beauty and the Beast** drawings and I think "Is anything ever going to change?"

So it's completely depressing here, actually! (laugh)



Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*:

Superb Entertainment, Plain and Simple

By Harry McCracken

Since everybody else is comparing **Beauty and the Beast** to **The Little Mermaid**, let's be a little different and compare it to another Disney animated feature: 1981's **The Fox and the Hound**.

While that film had some good animation, it was presented in a rough, haphazard form; **Beauty** has equally good animation and is among the most opulent Disney features of the past fifty years. **Fox** told its story in a bland, episodic way; **Beauty** makes its very old story involving from start to end. Most importantly, **Fox and the Hound** was a film made by artists who had lost touch with their audience but **Beauty and the Beast** promises to be a huge mainstream hit.

Obviously, things have changed a lot at the Disney studio over the past decade, and most of the change has been for the good. While Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise's film may not be the instant classic that it's already been labeled, it's an extremely winning musical romance that's inventive from start to end.

The movie isn't a carbon copy of **The Little Mermaid**, but there are decided similarities in approach. Both movies go for the Disney roots by being lushly adapted fairy tales, yet are distinctly products of their own era.

The Beauty is Belle (voiced by Paige O'Hara), a lookalike and soundalike for Judy Garland as Dorothy in **The Wizard of Oz**. Even though the story takes place in an 18th century French village, Belle is an appropriate 1990s role model: independent and gutsy, with a passion for books and reading that seems designed to please the librarians and literacy minded parents in the audience.

Also rather contemporary is Gaston, a self-obsessed, macho fellow whose plan to wed the unwilling Belle makes him the closest thing this film has to a villain. Gaston eventually tries to have Belle's father thrown into an insane asylum, then tries to slay the Beast, but for most of the film's running time his greatest crime is being a sexist pig.

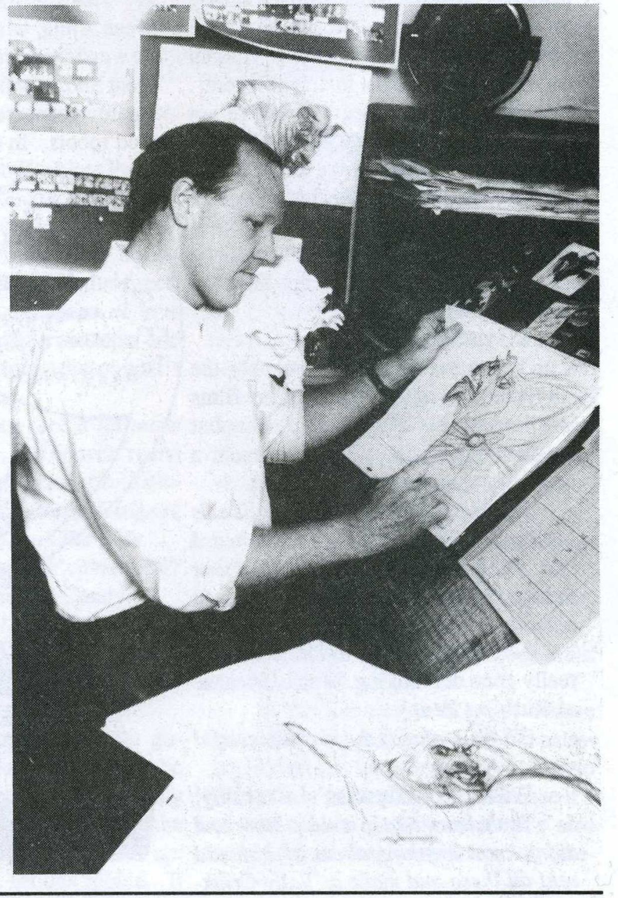
Despite having relatively little screen time, it's the Beast who is the film's most interesting character. If you've only seen still pictures of the character's buffalo-like design, you can't really appreciate how fascinating it is to watch this fellow, animated by Glen Keane and others, as he masks his pain and shyness with a ferocious exterior that slowly melts away. He begins as a snarling thing that bounds about on all fours, and ends up as Belle's soft-spoken, sensitive beau -- the transformation is seamless and perfectly natural. All of this is immeasurably strengthened by Robby Benson's fine vocal performance.

Most of the supporting cast is made up of the Beast's household staff, who were once people but have been turned into objects like teapots, feather dusters, forks, and spoons. Dozens of these enchanted objects take part in "Be Our Guest," a Busby Berkeley-like musical number; the two who really win our hearts are Lumiere, the Chevalier-like candelabra, and Cogsworth, a fussy and self-important mantel clock. When they revert to human form at the movie's conclusion, it's a genuinely touching moment, since we've cared about them as people from the start. On the other hand, Mrs. Potts, a matronly teapot voiced by Angela Lansbury, is never much more than a talking teapot with a famous voice.

One of the central delights of **Beauty and the Beast** is its use of music, a Disney trademark since at least the Silly Symphony era which had been considerably muted in recent years. (One suspects that **Rescuers Down Under** will prove to have been the last nonmusical Disney cartoon we'll see for quite awhile.)

Even though **Little Mermaid's** songs were slightly stronger, **Beauty's** musical numbers are more inventively staged and well integrated. The showstopping number is the flashy "Be Our Guest," but the best number is "Belle," the one that opens the film. It manages to be funny, wistful, and hummable while efficiently introducing us to Belle and her village and setting the stage for much of what follows.

One does wonder why songwriters Alan Menken and the late Howard



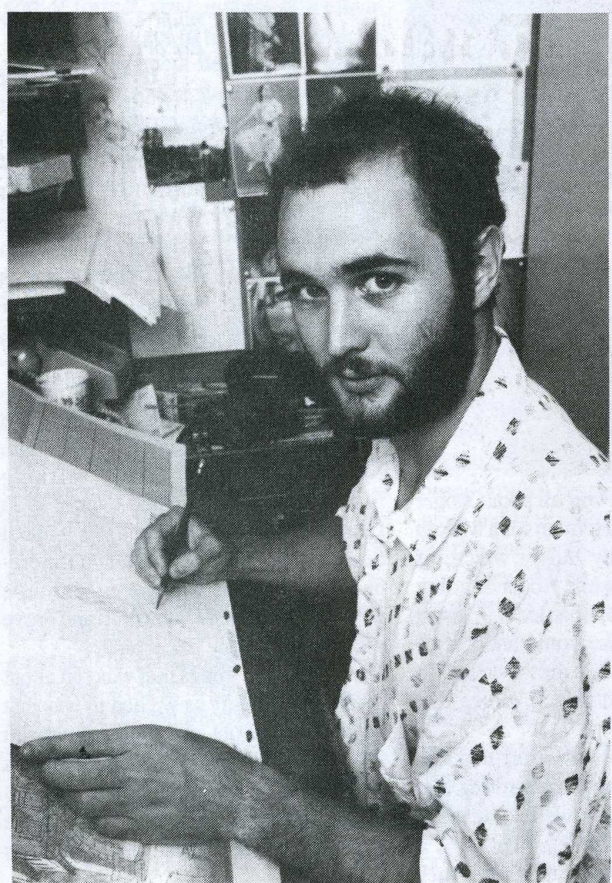
Ashman didn't give the Beast a chance to express his feelings in a musical number, when both Belle and Gaston were given that privilege. (In general, a little less Gaston and a little more Beast would have improved the film.) You can also quibble with the placement of a couple of songs in the story -- "Gaston" comes after we're already well acquainted with the character, and "Be Our Guest" takes place long after we know about the Beast's wondrous household staff.

Over the past few years, Disney animation has been moving away from the traditional storyboard-oriented approach towards live action scripting techniques, and Beauty has an "animation screenplay," credited to Linda Woolverton. It's hard to say whether or not this new approach to animation storytelling has had much effect on the finished film. For whatever reason, the movie is awfully talky, and the dialogue is often cliched and superfluous.

There are also some significant plot problems, most of which relate to the Beast's origins as a Prince whose beastly form is punishment for having turned away a poor old woman who was really a fairy. It's said that this happened ten years before the film's story but much of the story revolves around the fact that the Prince must find love by the end of his twenty-first year, which is soon approaching. This would mean that the Prince was only eleven at the time of his punishment, an idea which doesn't make a lot of sense and is not supported by his appearance in the stained glass tableaux which set up the story.

Just as importantly, the Beast seems to live a rather short distance from Belle's yet there's no evidence that any of the townspeople either recall the Prince, or know of the Beast until the film's climactic scenes. This sloppy storytelling is troubling mainly because it's so unnecessary.

If the plot problems are ultimately not all that important, it's largely because the film's visuals are so winning. The surface level artistry the lavish backgrounds, the use of unusual camera angles and multiplane-like effects is what catches the eye at first, but underneath the lavish use of color and special effects is some superb character animation.



Beauty is the first Disney film to specifically identify the animators who worked on each major character, so you can, for instance, specifically compliment Nancy Kniep for heading up the team that made Cogsworth such a lovably bossy little timepiece.

While the animation is almost always very good, the character designs are so inconsistent that they might have come from half a doze different films. Belle is almost totally realistic; Gaston is an odd, semi-realistic fellow who just doesn't look like a Disney character; and his henchman Le Fou is a completely cartoony creation. Many of the townspeople look like rejects from Fleischer's **Gulliver's Travels**. It's also worth noting that while Belle, whose animation was supervised by James Baxter, is usually a very well drawn, believable character, there is more than one scene in which she looks and moves nothing like herself. More than fifty years after **Snow White**, the Disney artists still aren't quite as facile with human beings as they are with humanized animals, beasts, and clocks and candles.

The nicest compliment you can pay to **Beauty**'s use of computer animation --which is extensive and expert -- is that there's not much to say about it, since for the most part the high tech tricks are seamlessly blended into the old-fashioned hand craftsmanship. The one notable exception is a ballroom scene in which everything other than Belle and the Beast was rendered on the computer, resulting in a photorealistic look that's extremely eye-catching but out of step with the rest of the film. It's a lot like **The Great Mouse Detective**'s use of very noticeable computer animation in the clocktower scene, which was a necessary first step towards the more subtle computer animation in more recent Disney films.

As good as **Beauty and the Beast** is, it doesn't have a lot to say that wasn't said most memorably by other Disney animated features of forty or fifty years ago. Its emulation of the classic Disney style is almost perfect, but it isn't possible to recreate the newness of the early Disney features by imitating them.

Directors Trousdale and Wise are so obviously talented that it would be nice to see what they might be capable of if they were unchained by the Disney house style. Unfortunately, it's only realistic to assume that the success of **Mermaid** and **Beauty** will lead to more Disney films in the same mold, rather than daring, experimental works.

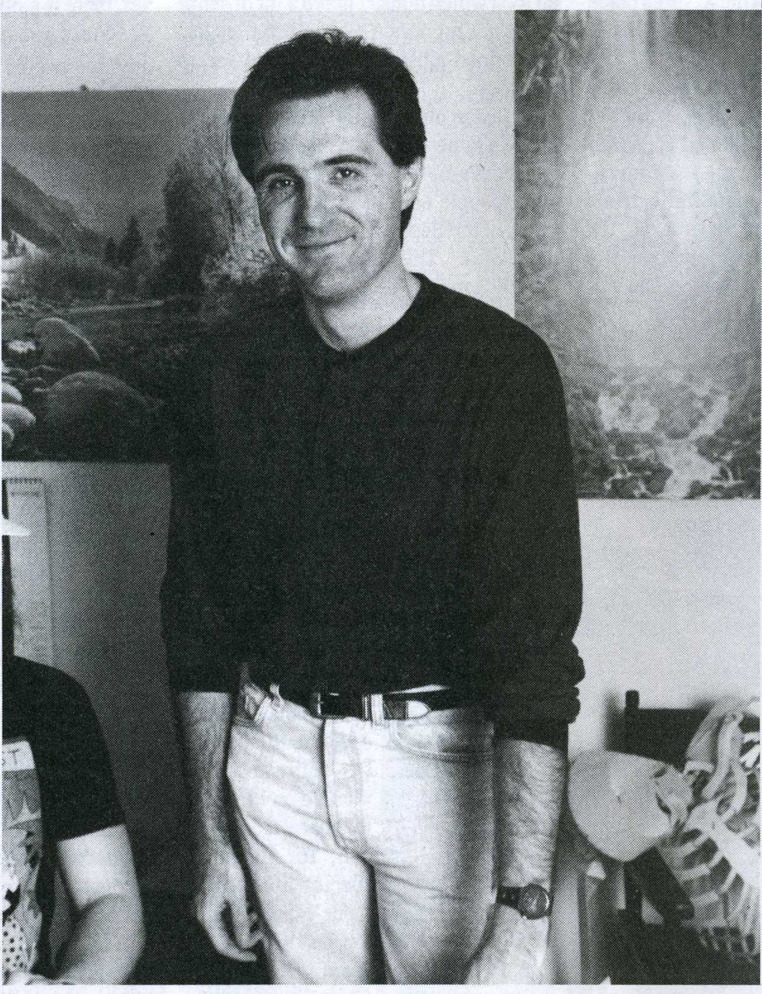
None of the above criticisms seem the least bit important though, when you're actually watching the movie, or when you stroll out of the theater humming the tunes to yourself. **Beauty and the Beast** is superb entertainment, plain and simple and can you ask more of any film?

Wise Beyond His Years

Disney Director Kirk Wise talks about *Beauty and the Beast*, music and animation, and why he never became a garbage collector.

by Jim Fanning

Kirk Wise is best known for his work on small, quirky projects. At Disney for a relatively short six years, Wise brings a fresh approach to that time honored Disney genre, the feature length animated fairy tale. Here, Wise talks about his career and his directorial work with co-director Gary Trousdale on **Beauty and the Beast**, Disney's 30th animated feature.



What did you and Gary Trousdale work on before being asked to direct* Beauty and the Beast*, your first feature directorial work?

Gary and I were both in the Story Department for a while and we worked on a lot of the same projects but never together. Shortly after **Rescuers Down Under**, Gary and I got the chance to do storyboards for a Roger Rabbit short. At the time Disney was trying to develop several different ideas for Roger Rabbit shorts and pitch them to Steven Spielberg over at Amblin in the hopes of getting an okay on one. Amblin had already committed to making *Tummy Trouble* but they knew they wanted to do more, and so three different groups of storyboard artists put together three different presentations. There was the presentation of *Roller Coaster Rabbit*, there was another one for a cartoon called "Hare in my Soup", and ours was called "Baby Buggy Blunder." It was all about Roger Rabbit taking Baby Herman for a walk in the park in his baby buggy which, of course, rolls away while Roger is going to get ice cream. We boarded it in about a week. It was like commando style storyboarding because they wanted to have this pitch for Steven Spielberg that Friday.

So we just sort of went into a frenzy of storyboarding and brainstorming and that was the first time we had actually collaborated on something. That was a lot of fun. We pitched it and it went very well. There was laughter throughout which is really encouraging, but they eventually decided to go with *Roller Coaster* which also turned out to be a great cartoon. I've actually heard at Walt Disney Imagineering that they're developing a ride idea about Roger Rabbit and a runaway baby carriage so who knows?

Your next collaboration was "Cranium Command" for Epcot Center.

It was another rush job. Epcot needed this pre-show, this four minutes of animation for their Wonders of Life pavilion and so again, in like a couple weeks we had to put together this whole little short, sort of semi-educational but very off-the-wall thing about the functions of the brain. We were working from an idea that they had over at Walt Disney Imagineering about this general named General Knowledge and the cranium commandos who were these little guys who live inside your skull and drove you around all day like a tank.

One of the things that was fun about doing it as quickly as we had to was that we really went out on a limb, going with sort of a wacky and fastpaced, irreverent style of humor and it went over. And we sort of got carte blanche to be as silly and as funny as we wanted to be, which is rare.

You and Gary were doing storywork for this project?

Yes, Gary and I both did the boards on it along with Tom Sito and Rob Minkoff and when the time came to actually produce this four-minute short, the directing task sort of fell to me and Gary. We were most familiar with the material at the time and they said we want you guys to direct it. So, boom, there we were. Our first time directing to do four minutes of animation in 90 days.

*How did your involvement with **Beauty and the Beast** £come about?*

Beauty and the Beast was in development and Dick and Jill Purdum were slated as the original directors. And they had a whole style and direction for it that was very beautiful to look at but it was very formal, and -- I don't know -- sort of straight-laced.

No disrespect intended because Dick Purdum is a brilliant guy and the work that I've seen him do in his commercials and stuff is wonderful, but the further along they got in the project, it became very clear that they wanted to do a very sort of formal, straight kind of a movie. And I think it got to the point where the upper management decided this wasn't quite the direction they wanted to go. They wanted to musicalize it and bring in Howard Ashman and sort of try to repeat the **Mermaid** magic again.

I don't think that was really the way Dick Purdum wanted to go so he eventually left the project which sort of created a vacuum.

So Gary and I found ourselves one day with Charlie Fink, who was head of development at that time and he said there's a strong possibility you guys might be directing **Beauty and the Beast**. Our jaws hit the floor and our hats blew off, and we sort of looked at each other in stunned disbelief. Both of us were scared to death but knew we would be crazy to say no.

Since we knew that Howard Ashman was going to be involved we got a great deal of enthusiasm for the project. Gary had worked with Howard before and I was a big fan since **Little Mermaid** and **Little Shop of Horrors** and I had always hoped to get the chance to work with him because he was a brilliant guy. I thought he could really bring an element of fun that really Disneyfied the material.

So I was really inspired by his involvement and so was Gary. We found ourselves in New York in a snowy December, sitting in a conference room with Disney Studios Chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg and Howard and the writer, Linda Woolverton. We had brought several artists along as sort of a commando squad to start creating storyboards and character designs and models. We had Chris Sanders and Sue Nichols and Bruce Woodside and Brenda Chapman. Our task was to try to hammer the storyline into a new shape, to try to devise new characters for this new storyline that Howard was working on. Since he had conceived it as a musical, he was trying to think of spots where the songs would tell the story, would support the story, and base the structure on that.

What new approaches came out of those initial New York-based meetings?

A lot of the time out there was spent trying to figure out songs, thoughts, what they might be, or who might sing them. A lot of the time was also spent thinking of what kind of characters can inhabit the Beast's enchanted castle.

The idea always existed that the Beast would have enchanted objects that would float around and do things for him. Howard hit upon the seemingly obvious ideas of giving them faces and names and personalities, and once we committed to that idea, everything started to click.

We started to get really excited about all these little guys who'd be sort of a supporting cast. So that was really an exciting time. It was just sitting around developing these characters, trying to think of what their personalities might be and how they might relate to Beauty and the Beast. We kept trying to develop their personalities based on what they were -- based on what properties the object might have and how that might translate into a human animatable character trait.

The result was Cogsworth the clock, Lumiere the candelabra, and Mrs. Potts the teapot.

Those are the main ones. They're sort of the Greek chorus who follow Belle and the Beast around and they carry a lot of the story and a lot of the songs. Those have been the most fun for me to see those come to life. Because I think it was really nice to see them get plussed at every opportuniy.

How would you describe your relationship with your co-director, Gary Trousdale?

Actually, we're very well suited for each other personality-wise. Gary and I find a lot of the same things funny which definitely helps a lot. And our tastes in movies and comedy and animation are very similar.

You wouldn't know that to look at us. Physically we're about as different as any two people could be. Gary's about 6'3" with a big bushy red beard, long red ponytail. He wears a visor and camouflage pants at all times. I always found it refreshing to walk into a meeting with executives wearing suits and ties and Gary would walk in with his ponytail and his visor and his camouflage pants and added just the right note of irreverence that I think animation thrives on.

How did you and Gary share your directorial duties?

Gary and I tend to collaborate a lot. Rather than each doing separate sequences we sort of split up areas of production. I'll concentrate more on animation and the voice recording and Gary would concentrate more on layout and effects -- but there was still a great deal of cross-pollinization. Gary would often come in to criticize scenes or I would sometimes pop into layout. Just because that was sort of how we formally split it up, there was never a sense that any one area was one particular person's turf. It was very give and take.

What does Gary Trousdale as an individual bring to a project?

Gary is one of the funniest storymen in the business, and easily one of the fastest story sketch artists I've ever seen. Gary is able to come up with a zillion funny ideas at the drop of a hat and draw them up just as fast. Tremendously valuable asset to have. I think Gary also has a fascination for all things mechanical, all things medieval. He loves gothic castles and gargoyles and things of that nature and I think a lot of his influence was felt in the strength of the layout of this film. Gary also tries to give things a different spin, a slightly different twist.

Gary's usually not satisfied with doing things in the exact same old predictable way. He always tries to look for ways to put a spin on it, make it something slightly different than what you've

seen before. I think that really came through in the design of the Beast. Gary was passionate about the Beast having a look that was not like any other look of beasts in previous versions that we'd seen before.

I think that came through in the character of Belle, too. Gary was very determined that she not look like a dime-a-dozen Disney heroine. I have a tremendous affection for the old Disney films and sort of a traditional Disney character design and storytelling. Gary brings an irreverent sense of humor to that. He will sometimes push in directions that might be a little more different, a little more off center than I might necessarily choose. But I think it's a really positive thing because Gary's sensibilities helped things stay very fresh and alive.

Can you expand on what you bring to an animated project?

I think I balance Gary because I'm a story structure nut. And that comes from all of my influences. I have a tremendous affection for old movies, drama and literature and so I'm crazed about story structure. It's probably the thing I was the most critical and passionate about in this film: Trying to make sure that the first and second and third acts built on each other, working as best I could with the writer and the storyboard artists to create twists and turns and unexpected moments and set up ideas early in the movie that would pay off later.

And again, I think both Gary and I have a pretty good sort of built-in sense of entertainment -- I hope! We find a lot of the same things funny and a lot of the same things sad or moving or exciting. The biggest challenge as a director is you hope that the things that excite you, move you, thrill you, or interest you will be the same things that excite, thrill, move, or interest most people.

What was it like working with Howard Ashman?

Working with Howard was definitely a privilege because I think he's almost single-handedly responsible for helping put Disney animation back on the map with **Little Mermaid**. His background in musical theater was so strong he found a way to marry animation and musical theater. Actually it wasn't so much marry as he saw a natural cross-pollinization between the two art forms, American musical theater and American animated features. Both are home grown art forms and owe a lot to each other. It was Howard who best understood the relation of the two. So when he helped structure the story for **Beauty and the Beast** he structured it very much in the same spirit as a traditional musical where the songs support the story and propel the action of the story and are not just tacked on. So he was instrumental in that regard, as well as being very much involved in the casting of the voices and development of the characters.

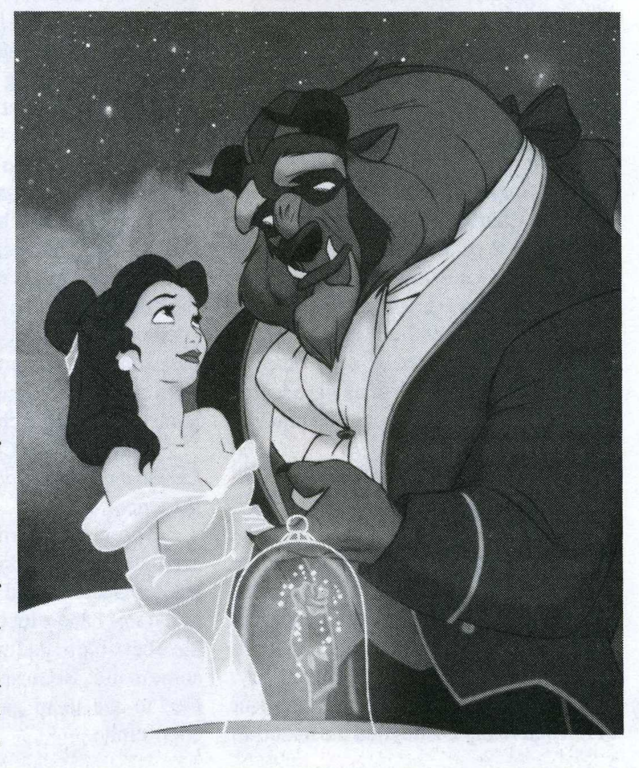
*Ashman's death earlier this year seems a great lost to Disney animation, although he also wrote songs with partner Alan Menken for the forthcoming **Aladdin**. How would you sum up Howard Ashman?*

Extremely passionate. He had tremendous integrity. More than anyone else that I've worked with outside of Disney.

Howard had a really good instinctual understanding of what worked best for animation. He was a very good visual thinker. And the fact that he grew up enjoying these films as much as we did was tremendous.

That was the thing that bridged the gap between us. He knew as much about these things as we did. It's sometimes difficult to work with people from the outside or from different medium, like live action, and get them to be able to relate to thinking for animation.

Howard was a complete natural. Even his musicals like **Little Shop of Horrors** have a larger than life cartoony feeling. I used to listen to the **Little Shop of Horrors** score. It had a neat, cartoony flair, so for a long time I'm thinking, gee, wouldn't **Little Shop of Horrors** make a neat animated film. It was eventually made in live action but eventually Howard came to animation. So that was sort of a dream come true for a lot of people.



*Let's talk about the movie itself. Tell us about the visual style of **Beauty and the Beast**.*

I think we've been really successful in working with Brian McEntee, the art director, in creating a very lush, very painterly look to the piece. We were really trying to bring that feel of paintings from the French Romantic period to life and create an art direction style that would be evocative of that, something very lush and soft and romantic.

I think we brought back a lot of the look, a lot of the production value that people associate with a lot of the earlier Disney films. It was a real challenge to live up to films like **Bambi** and **Pinocchio**, but with the talent that we had, painters and the art direction and the new technologies that we have, I think we were able to recapture a great deal of the beauty of the earlier films, while at the same time telling a story about fairy tale romance in a '90s context.

You mentioned before the design of the two title characters. What were the

challenges in coming up with a brand new beast?

It was a long time coming. In the first version, the Beast was designed as sort of a big, burly man with a babboon head.

While that was interesting, we didn't feel that we were really taking advantage of the animation possibilities. Most of the versions we'd seen of the story usually had just a man with a funny head, and we thought it would be much more exciting from an animation standpoint if the spell that was cast on the Beast would affect his entire body so he would walk like a human, like an animal, just sort of caught between two worlds.

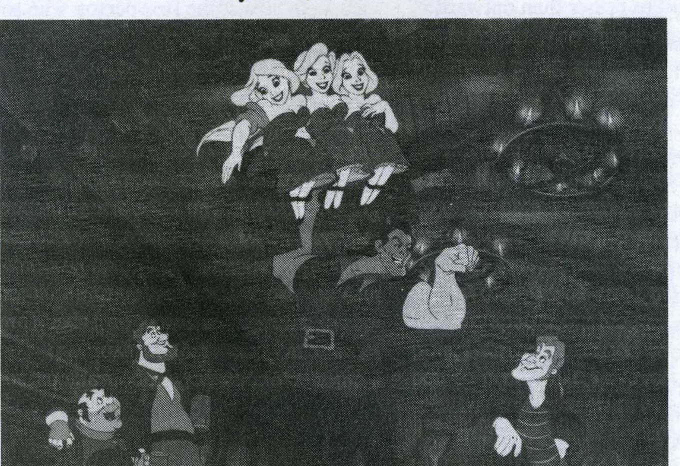


Chris Sanders started working on designs that combined a lot of different animal forms. Like buffalo horns and a bear-like body and a wolf-like tail. Glen Keane became involved and made frequent trips to the zoo and sketched a lot of different animals, ended up with an animal that's sort of a combination of all beasts, so he looks familiar yet you can't quite pinpoint what sort of animal he is. He has a lion mane and buffalo head and a gorilla brow, buffalo horns, boar's tusks, so he's sort of a mish-mash.

The other real challenge was making sure that the design would be one that could convey emotion. I know that people were concerned that if we got too fantastic with the design, people wouldn't be able to relate human feelings to this character. And we sort of felt that, well, that's what Disney is in the business of doing -- allowing the audience to feel emotions for things that aren't necessarily human. The studio has a history of assigning personalities to things as diverse as, you know, everything from oysters to sports cars, as well as tigers, dogs, and bears. I thought that we could push the Beast pretty far and still retain an element of humanity. I think Glen was really successful in his drawings in capturing the humanity beneath all the fur.

*What obstacles were there in creating Belle, the "Beauty" of **Beauty and the Beast**?*

That was another toughie. One of the toughest things about designing a Disney heroine, as Gary has pointed out, was that many times the Disney heroines are like the same girl with different hair. We definitely wanted to avoid the same-girl-with-different-hair syndrome. I thought Ariel was really successful in **The Little Mermaid** because she broke the mold and had a really fresh, sort of American teenage look, with a personality that was very winning, with a lot of sparkle and life, and was very contemporary.



One of the challenges in creating Belle was to try to make a heroine that was contemporary but had a whole different set of attributes and positive qualities that Ariel might not necessarialy have had. I think the things they have in common is they're both very independent and strong willed and have a clear-cut goal that they try to pursue. And that was something especially Linda Woolverton the writer felt was very important: making her an active character who makes things happen, doesn't have things happen to her. That was really sort of digressing from the original fairy tale.

In the original fairy tale, Belle was a more passive character and her father comes back, after stealing the Beast's rose and says, "Oh my God, the Beast wants you to live with him now" and she says, "Okay, I'll do it for you" and goes off and lives with the Beast.

In our version of the story, Belle ends up making her trek to the castle to rescue her father and offers her life in exchange for his, sort of as an act of noble self-sacrifice. We found that by doing that, that was just enough spin on it to make her be the active protagonist. As far as her design is concerned, we wanted to give her a fuller face, a fuller feel to her features, not quite as sort of skinny and angular as some of the ones that have been done in the past.

The overall art direction was one of a very soft look. We wanted to give Belle sort of a soft look as well. We didn't want her to be a blonde because one of the things that we thought would echo the storyline of beauty is only skin deep was to make Belle beautiful but in an old-fashioned, plain way. So we tried not to make her look too overly made up or overly glamorous. We wanted her to look a little like the girl next door.

The other thing we wanted to do to set her apart was give her an intellectual interest. We gave her a passion for books which ends up a theme throughout the whole film. Belle is a reader and a lover of fairy tales and wishes her life to be more like them. In this mundane little

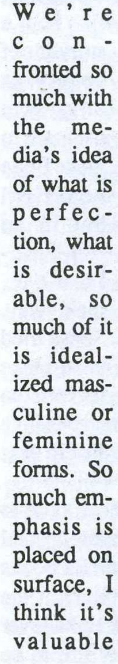
peasant village where she lives, she sort of escapes to the world of fantasy and ends up being plunged into a fairy tale that has more twists and turns and ups and downs than anything she'd ever read.

Even though Ariel wasn't a passive character, ***The Little Mermaid*** *was criticized by some for being sexist because she sacrificed everything to win a man. Are you dealing with these issues in working with Belle's character?*

That's always a difficult thing about adapting any fairy tale -- trying to be true to the original yet making it contemporary enough for an audience now to relate to. And I think that was one of the reasons we concentrated so hard on trying to make Belle a strong and positive female character instead of a wimpering little victim or damsel in distress.

I think the other thing that works for Belle is that there's no one in town who understands her. Belle is sort of a misfit, an oddball.

Ironically, the first person to share her interest in books and her fantasies turns out to be the Beast, this guy you'd never think in a million years that she'd have anything in common with. So I'm hoping that's one of the things that makes it sort of a love story for the '90s, as well as for all time, is the emphasis on positive inward qualities rather than outward external appearances. I think it's an important story that has to be told over and over.


We're confronted so much with the media's idea of what is perfection, what is desirable, so much of it is idealized masculine or feminine forms. So much emphasis is placed on surface, I think it's valuable to tell the story that very clearly emphasizes that beauty's skin deep.

What about your own story? What is your personal background?

I was born in San Francisco. My parents were of the hippie generation so I grew up in the Bay area in and around that culture. I spent a couple of years in a commune when I was 5 or 6 with my parents and their friends. It was like several families living in a big ranch house in Novato, California. Lots of people coming and going, but I was always surrounded by people, surrounded by other kids, and it was a very warm, happy, loving environment. I really enjoyed it.

I was surrounded by a lot of artists and musicians and all kinds of different types. Sort of became part of this whole counter culture in the 1960s.

Some of my earliest memories are from that period. The music I was raised with was Bob Dylan and the Beatles. That was the music my parents listened to so naturally I listened to it as well.

Very early on I became interested in drawing, inspired by my dad who had also been an artist. He drew and I was always amazed, it was like some sort of really neat magic trick watching him draw. It was a magic trick I really wanted to learn, so he was the first person who sort of encouraged my interest in drawing. My mom and dad always made sure there were lots of paper and pencils and crayons around the house, so there was never a lack of that.

One of the earliest things I remember doing that sort of got me interested in drawing as a life's pursuit was that in the *San Francisco Chronicle* every week they had this little thing in the comics section called "Junior Art Champion" where kids would send in their drawings and they would pick one and they would publish it next to all the other comics, right next to "Peanuts" and "Blondie" and "Andy Capp". Every week I would look at the comics and I would look at the "Junior Art Champion" and think, boy, that would be really cool to be published in there.

I was about six at the time, but I remember my earliest ambition before wanting to be an artist was to be a garbage man because that just looked like a lot of fun to a kid. It looked like great fun. You could get up before dawn, you could make a lot of noise rattling the cans, and you got to ride on this big truck. You got to pour the garbage in and watch the machine smash the garbage. I followed the garbage men up and down the street.

I was so excited about being a garbage man that I went inside and I drew a picture of the garbage men, the garbage truck, I wrote Bay Cities Refuse on the side of the garbage truck, and unbeknownst to me my mom sent it off to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. And lo and



behold, a few weeks later I opened the paper and there was my drawing. I won! I was that week's Junior Art Champion. My jaw hit the floor, my eyes bugged out, I couldn't believe it. And the paper sent me a check for $10 and the sanitation department sent me a letter thanking me for the free advertising.

I was amazed. I'd never gotten this much attention in my life. I knew then and there -- my interest immediately changed from being a garbage man to being a cartoonist.

So your first artistic interest was the comic strips?

They were always my passion. I was a tremendous fan of "Peanuts", "B.C."; I'd spend hours pouring over the stuff. And I'd always loved animation too. My parents always took me to the Disney movies when they would come out. But for a long time Disney animation always seemed like this sort of unattainable thing. It was so beautiful and captivating and magical, but it looked so hard to do. It was sort of intimidating, but I knew that I was always interested in doing it.



How did you become interested in animation as a career?

Around the fourth or fifth grade a friend of mine took a community center course called film animation where the kids were making films on Super 8 with cutouts, clay, and models, and he asked me to come along with him one day. So I started helping him on his film. He was making like a space movie or something and I started drawing all these space ships and handing them to him and he put them under the camera and then he put his name on it - which I guess was good training for what I would do in the future.

I became so interested in making these little Super 8 films that next time the class came around I took it myself and started making my own films and putting my own name on them. So I was making Super 8 films for quite a few years and that's when I first became interested in doing animation as a future goal.

I was midway through high school doing comic strips for the school paper and the yearbook and stuff like that when I found out about Cal Arts. And I knew right then and there that this is the school I have to get into. I put together a portfolio of all the drawings I could find and submitted them to Cal Arts and eventually got accepted to study animation.

What was your first professional animation experience?

During my fourth year at Cal Arts I got a chance to do some freelance animation for Darrell Van Citters on the Sport Goofy *Soccermania* short. And that was my first exposure to animation in the professional world. I learned how to properly fill out an exposure sheet, do my timing charts so an assistant could follow it up, stuff you never had to worry about at Cal Arts because you were your own cameraman, you were your own assistant, you were your own film editor.

Shortly after that I got a job working for Jerry Rees on **The Brave Little Toaster**, doing experimental animation and that was a lot of fun. That was a neat little project -- I enjoyed working with a small crew.

Shortly after that I ended up at Disney. I had always wanted to work for Disney. It was something that became really clear when I was in high school, that that's where I eventually wanted to be.

What were some of the Disney projects you worked on?

I did some animation on **The Great Mouse Detective** -- that was the first thing I worked on here, doing a little bit of Basil and Dawson. And I did animation and some storyboarding on **Oliver and Company** and I did some storyboarding for a short film, a computer animated film called *Oil Spot and Lipstick*. After that I went into story and started doing story development and storyboards on Mickey Mouse featurettes and ended up doing storyboards for *Prince and the Pauper*.

Didn't you also work on Family Dog *for Steven Spielberg?*

I was an animator and also did some storyboards on that original *Family Dog* episode for the **Amazing Stories** show on NBC. That was a lot of fun. That was one of the more fun projects I had worked on up to that point. Again, that was a very small group working on a project that had a very sort of irreverent off-the-wall style of humor with not real typical animation designs -- they were based on Tim Burton's sketches -- and it turned out to be a lot of fun. Most of the staff on *Family Dog* were Cal Arts alumni, some of them were ex-Disney animators. So it was in the spirit of Disney character animation with a real irreverent twist to it.

What are some of your favorite moments in Beauty and the Beast?

One of my favorite scenes in the movie is when Cogsworth the Clock has to break the news to the Beast that Belle is not coming down to dinner. One of the



things that makes it wonderful is the hilarious vocal performance by David Ogden Stiers where he's hedging and hawing and can't bring himself to tell the Beast the bad news and he goes through about a dozen different expression changes within a span of seconds. You can just see this little guy's confidence dissolve in the face of this monster. I think it's just priceless.

Another one of my favorite little sequences is where the Beast is outside Belle's door pounding on it and demanding that she come down to dinner and the objects are trying to calm him down and tell him to be gentle.

There's just some wonderful moments in that where I think it's the first time in the movie where we see a humorous side to his personality that we can enjoy beneath all of his bluster and anger. There's humor to be had over the fact that he's completely at odds with this girl who's the first person he's ever encountered who won't do what he tells them to do.

One of my favorite characters is Chip, the little teacup. Originally we knew we wanted in our cast of supporting characters a "cute" one, a Dopey if you will. The idea of a music box who didn't speak but instead had a musical chiming voice seemed like a natural. But Linda Woolverton came up with the idea of giving Mrs. Potts a son, a little chipped teacup named Chip, and we started including him in more scenes, and when it came around to voice casting we found this little kid named Bradley Pierce who was just a natural. A very cute kid, very funny.

After his first recording session we realized, God, this little guy is hilarious so we started including his voice in early screenings for the film for the staff and he got such a great reaction, and we kept working him into more and more sequences. The more sequences we worked him into, the more the music box started to get pushed further out of the movie. We found ourselves with two cute characters. It was like two Dopeys. One of them had to play second fiddle to the other. And I think it was just a lot easier to come up with business for Chip because he could talk.

So eventually a lot of the action of the story that the music box had to carry we started assigning to Chip and it worked out just fine. Now the music box appears in a tiny little cameo, one shot in the film. Our little salute to him. Chip sort of behaves a little bit like that kid who sits next to you in the movie theater constantly leaning over to his mom, saying, "What are they going to do now, mom? Where are they going? What's happening?" I think he sort of provides that function for the audience.

What sort of animated feature do you hope to direct as a follow-up to Beauty and the Beast?

As much as I enjoyed working on fairy tales, I still have a desire to work on something a little more contemporary, something that might have a little more of an edge to it, something a little more contemporary, a little more hip, a little more off center in the way that *Cranium Command* was off center. That's a very natural part of my personality and my humor and Gary's as well.

I hope that Gary and I work together again and can work on something like that.

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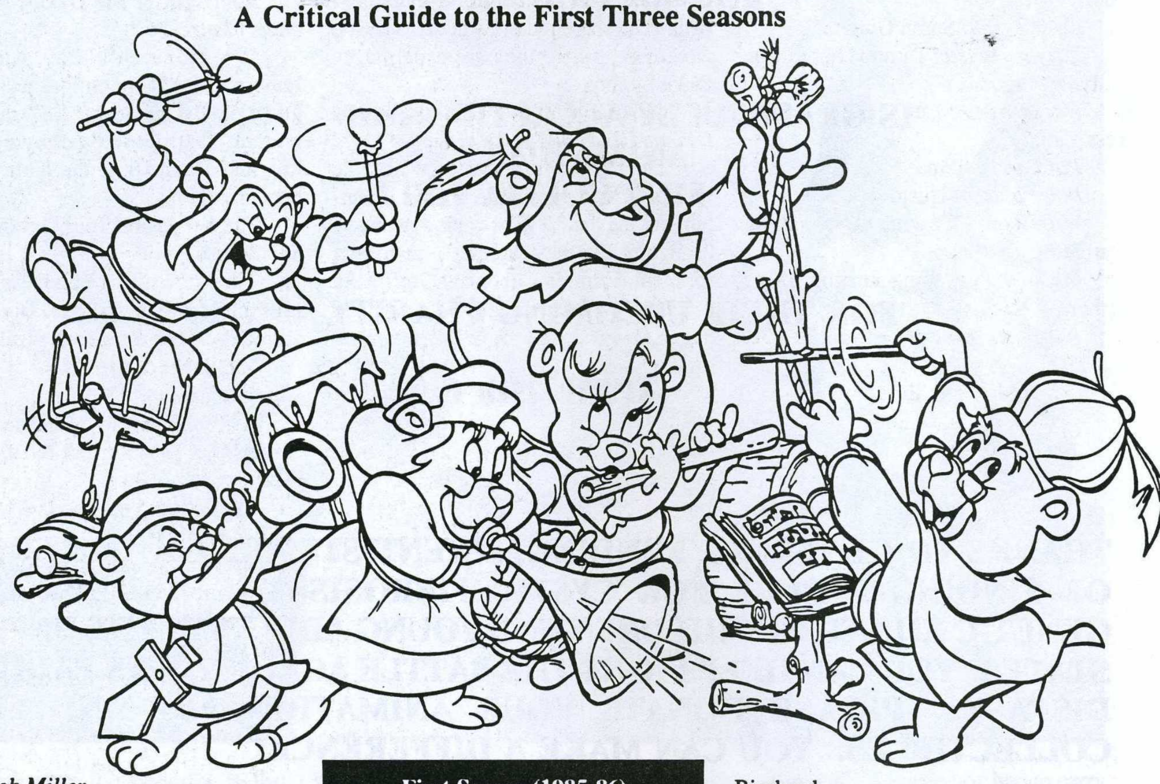
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Adventures of the Gummi Bears

A Critical Guide to the First Three Seasons



by Bob Miller

A wicked knight. Fearsome ogres. A ferocious dragon. Unearthly trolls. An evil sorceress. Powerful wizards. High-flying Carpies. Giants. Poachers!

Who can save the peaceful kingdom of Dunwyn from these terrible threats?

Gummi Bears.

Yes, a small band of miniature medieval bears, shrouded in legend and fairy tales, risk their secret existence to aid their human friends.

The saga of the Gummi Bears began September 1985, lasting four seasons on NBC, a fifth season on ABC, then a sixth season in syndication on "The Disney Afternoon" schedule, for a full 65 episodes. This September, the show moved to The Disney Channel.

The following is an episode guide to the first three seasons of Gummi Bears, presented in broadcast order. Some stories are 22 minutes in length (not including commercials); others are 11 minutes, and are indicated as "a" and "b" listings. I've rated the episodes on this scale: * poor, ** fair, *** good, **** excellent, ***** outstanding.

First Season (1985-86)

Producer/Director: Arthur Vitello

Associate Producer: Tom Ruzicka

Story Editor: Jymn Magon

Storyboard Directors: Thom Enriquez, Hank Tucker, Rob La Duca, Steve Gordon

Animation Supervisors: David Block, Bob Zamboni, John Ahern

Key Layout Stylist: Ed Wexler

Key Background Stylist: Gary Eggleston

Additional Background Styling (second season): Michael Humphries

Color Key Stylist: Janet Cummings

Production Manager: Olivia Miner

Assistant Director: Kent Holaday (first season); Randy Chaffee (second season)

Animation Checker: Ann Oliphant

Post Production Coordinator: Ken Tsumura

Production Assistants: Aida Belderol-Martin, Leigh Anne Locke, Judy Zook

Post Production Supervisor: Rich Harrison

Supervising Editor: Robert S. Birchard

Editor: Willy R. Allen (first season); Craig Jaeger (second season)

Assistant Editors: Shelley Brown, Robert A. Martel (first season), Rick Hinson, Glenn Lewis (second season)

Music Coordinator: Chris Montan

"Gummi Bear" theme words and music by Silversher and Silversher; Music composed and conducted by Thomas Chase and Steve Rucker.

Track Reading: Skip Craig

Casting Facilities: The Voicecaster

Recording and Mixing Facilities: B & B Sound

Videotape Facilities: Complete Post

Animation production: TMS Entertainment, Inc.

Cast:

Corey Burton: Gruffi Gummi, Toadie (second season)

Roger C. Carmel: Sir Tuxford (second season)

Jim Cummings: Chummi

June Foray: Grammi Gummi, "The Most Peaceful Dragon in the World"

Bob Holt: Giant with the Wishing Stone, Dom Gordo of Ghent

Christian Jacobs: Cavin (first season)

Brett Johnson: Cavin (second season)

Katie Leigh: Sunni Gummi

Lorenzo Music: Tummi Gummi, the Bubble Dragon

Noelle North: Cubbi Gummi, Princess Calla

Pat Parris: Trina

Rob Paulsen: Gusto

Will Ryan: Unwin, Ogres, King Carpie

Michael Rye: King Gregor, Duke Igthorn, Gowan

Bill Scott: Gruffi Gummi, Toadie, Sir Tuxford, Angelo Davini, Ogre

Lennie Weinrib: Zorlock

Paul Winchell: Zummi Gummi, Slumber Sprite

1. **A New Beginning** *by Douglas Hutchinson.*****

Duke Igthorn and his ogres build a giant catapult with which to crush Castle Dunwyn. Meanwhile, young Cavin discovers that Gummi Bears aren't fairy tales after all, and they agree to help him stop the Duke.

2a. **The Sinister Sculptor** *by Michael Maurer.****

Angelo Davini is a con artist posing as a sculptor, who uses a magic powder to freeze live animals into statues. As a gift for Princess Calla, King Gregor buys four of his sculptures — that are real Gummi Bears. Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse cameo as two statues.

2b. **Zummi Makes It Hot** *by Douglas Hutchinson.*****

Grammi requires pure water to make Gummiberry Juice, but something has clogged the plumbing system. The problem is at the Gummi pumping station 30 miles to the northeast — in the land of Drekmore, home of the ogres.

3a. **Someday My Prints Will Come** *by Steve Hulett, Richard Hoag, and Jymn Magon.**

Zummi and Tummi find an ancient Gummi machine, a huge footprint maker used as a dragon decoy. The machine runs amok, drawing the attention of Sir Tuxford and his knights — and a real dragon. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck cameo as two bath toys.

3b. **Can I Keep Him?** *by Bruce Talkington.***

Zummi gives a restless Cubbi a magic flute and sends him outside to play with Sunni. At a nearby lake, the cubs discover the flute can control a flying serpent. The serpent carries them to Castle Drekmore, where they are captured by Duke Igthorn.

4. **A Gummi in a Gilded Cage** *by Dianne Dixon and Jymn Magon.* ***1/2

The Carpies are fearsome birdlike creatures who nest in the highest mountain in the land. Their king wants a "songbird," so they capture Sunni to sing for them. Zummi, Cubbi and Gruffi take off after them in an ancient Gummi flying machine, but the Carpies dismantle it in mid-air.

5a. **The Oracle** *by Bruce Talkington.*****

The Duke and his ogres consult an Oracle for the secret of Gummiberry Juice. But the Oracle has a secret of its own.

5b. **When You Wish Upon a Stone** *by Michael Maurer.**

Cavin wishes that he were as big as the bully Unwin, so he and Cubbi journey to the Cavern of Shadows to find the Wishing Stone, which happens to be guarded by a giant.

6. **A Gummi By Any Other Name** *by Douglas Hutchinson.*****

Zummi gives Sunni a magic hat, which enables her to turn into anyone she names. In a variation of The Prince and the Pauper, Princess Calla leaves the castle to live as a peasant, while Sunni takes her place. Both are captured by Duke Igthorn, and later, Calla discovers a startling secret.

7a. **Loopy, Go Home** *by Douglas Hutchinson.**

Cubbi raises a wolf cub whose mother was taken by a poacher.

7b. **A-Hunting We Will Go** *by Kimberlay Wells and Mike Lyons.**

A giant boar terrorizes the countryside.

8. **The Secret of the Juice** *by Michael Maurer.******

Grammi Gummi teaches Sunni the secret of making Gummiberry Juice. While Grammi is picking berries, she is captured by the ogres and taken to Castle Drekmore, where the Duke has built a massive juice-making factory. The Gummies race to the rescue before the Duke can force the secret from Grammi.

9a. **The Fence Sitter** *by Bruce Talkington.**

The Bears have to stop a large bird from eating all the Gummiberries.

9b. **Night of the Gargoyle** *by Michael Maurer.****

It's Monarch's Day, and Duke Igthorn sends King Gregor a stone gargoyle in the guise of a Gummi Bear present. That night the gargoyle comes to life, and scampers to the King's chambers to kill him.

10a. **Sweet and Sour Gruffi** *by Randal Case.**

Tired of Gruffi's bossiness, Zummi zaps him with a spell to sweeten his attitude — with disastrous results.

10b. **Duel of the Wizards** *by Douglas Hutchinson.****

A misunderstanding leads to a battle of magic between Zummi and the wizard Dom Gordo of Ghent.

11a. **What You See Is Me** *by Bob Langhans.******

Running from the ogres, Tummi finds refuge with Trina, a blind shepherdess who proves to be more than a match for Duke Igthorn.

11b. **Toadie's Wild Ride** *by Bruce Talkington.*****

Banished from Castle Drekmore for losing the Duke's battle plans, Toadie stumbles into a Quick Tunnel coaster, which takes him to Gummi Glen.

12a. **Bubble Trouble** *by Bruce Talkington.***

Sunni makes friends with a baby dragon whose hiccups produce explosive bubbles. Igthorn finds the dragon and uses it as a weapon against Castle Dunwyn.

12b. **Gummi in a Strange Land** *by Douglas Hutchinson.****

Gruffi falls under the spell of a Sleeping Sprite. To snap him out of the spell, Grammi and Cubbi pursue the Sprite into the deadly swamps of Drekmore.

13a. **Light Makes Right** *by Michael Maurer.******

Years ago, the Great Gummi Scope was built for communications between the Bears who left Dunwyn and the Bears who remained. Its beam of light could also be focused into a powerful laser weapon. Duke Igthorn spots the Gummi Scope when Zummi tries to contact the Bears across the sea. The Duke captures the Scope and aims it toward Castle Dunwyn.

Second Season (1986-1987)

Stories by Jymn Magon & Arthur Vitello.

14. **Up, Up and Away** *teleplay by Doug Hutchinson.****

The Bears meet Chummi, a Bear whose balloon-boat crashes in Gummi Glen. Cubbi wishes to fly with him to the land of the Great Gummies, but the Bears' plans are spoiled when Igthorn finds and takes control of the balloon ship for an aerial attack on Castle Dunwyn.

15a. **Faster Than a Speeding Tummi** *teleplay by Bruce Talkington.****

Zummi inadvertantly zaps Tummi with a speed spell, which turns out to be unstable.

15b. **For a Few Sovereigns More** *teleplay by Mark Zaslove.******

The Duke wants bounty hunter Flint Shrubwood to make his day by bringing in a Gummi Bear.

16a. **Over the River and Through the Trolls** *teleplay by Bruce Talkington.***

Introducing Cavin's grandfather Gowan, a former knight who believes in Gummi Bears. Gowan is guarding a shipment of gold,and a band of troll highwaymen seek to rob it.

16b. **You Snooze, You Lose** *teleplay by Bruce Talkington.******

Igthorn's potion puts all of Dunwyn to sleep, and the only ones who can protect the castle are Calla, Cavin and the Gummi Bears.

17. **The Crimson Avenger** *teleplay by Mark Zaslove.****

Cubbi becomes The Crimson Avenger, defender of truth, justice, and the Dunwynian way, with Tummi as his sidekick, Pronto. His biggest challenge: a trio of robbers who frame him, Cavin and Calla. Cameo appearance of the poacher from "Loopy, Go Home."

18a. **A Hard Dazed Knight** *teleplay by Jim Pasternak.*****

Gruffi dons a suit of mechanical armor to battle an army of ogres so Calla can rescue her father from Igthorn's spell.

18b. **Do Unto Ogres** *teleplay by Mark Zaslove.***

Toadie inadvertantly drinks an experimental growth potion and attacks Castle Drekmore as a giant. The only one who can stop him — is Sunni!

19. **For Whom the Spell Holds** *teleplay by Len Uhley.*****

Zorlock the wizard, magically imprisoned underground, sends a Grot-creature to steal the Great Book of Gummi to counteract the spell that binds him, and begin a campaign of world conquest.

20a. **Little Bears Lost** *teleplay by Mark Zaslove.***

A thief lurks in Gummi Glen. Zummi and Grammi try to find him, even though they're an inch small.

20b. **Guess Who's Gumming to Dinner?** *teleplay by Bruce Talkington.**

Sunni wants to impress Calla with a feast, but her plans don't go smoothly when the Bears behave strangely.

21. **My Gummi Lies Over the Ocean** *teleplay by Doug Hutchinson, Jymn Magon, Bruce Talkington and Mark Zaslove.* ****

When Gruffi and Tummi are stranded on an island, they discover the island is sinking, and its volcano is about to erupt. Introducing Gusto Gummi and Artie Deco.

Third Season (1987-1988)

Producers: Tad Stones, Alan Zaslove

Associate Producer: Tom Ruzicka

Director: Alan Zaslove

Story Editors: Jymn Magon (episodes 22a, 22b, 24a, 24b), Tad Stones

Storyboard Directors: Thom Enriquez, Hank Tucker, Rob La Duca, Steve Gordon

Overseas Animation Supervisor: Russell Mooney

Key Layout Design: Ed Wexler

Key Background Stylist: Gary Eggleston

Color Key Stylist: Janet Cummings

Assistant Producer: Randy Chaffee

Timing Directors: Dave Brain, Jamie Mitchell, Bob Zamboni

Production Manager: Olivia Miner

Art Coordinator: Krista Bunn

Production Assistants: Barbara Brysman, Luanne Wood

Managing Editor: Rich Harrison

Supervising Editor: Robert S. Birchard

Sound Editors: Mark Orfanos, Karen Doulac

Assistant Editors: Rick Hinson, Glenn Lewis

Animation production by TMS Entertainment, Inc.

Cast:

Corey Burton: Gruffi Gummi, Toadie, Gigglin

Brian Cummings: Chillbeard Sr., Knight of Gummadoon

David Faustino: Knight of Gummadoon

June Foray: Grammi Gummi, Councillor Woodale, Mobile Tree, Girl

Katie Leigh: Sunni Gummi, Mobile Tree

Howard Morris: Sir Ponch

Tress MacNeille: Marsipan, Great Oak, Mother

Chuck McCann: Tadpole, Sir Tuxford

Lorenzo Music: Tummi Gummi

Noelle North: Cubbi Gummi, Princess Calla, Mobile Tree

Alan Oppenheimer: Knight of Gummadoon

Pat Parris: Aquarianne

Rob Paulsen: Augustus "Gusto" Gummi

Will Ryan: Gad, Zook, Ogres, Knight

Michael Rye: King Gregor, Duke Igthorn, Malsinger, Horse, Troll

Frank Welker: Ditto, Chillbeard Jr., Mervyns, Mother Griffin

Paul Winchell: Zummi Gummi, Clutch, Tuck

22a. **Too Many Cooks** *by Bruce Talkington.***1/2

Sir Ponch, the Imperial Taffy Maker comes to Dunwyn to make his last batch of irresistable taffy. Tummi, Sunni and Cubbi hide in the kitchen to copy his secret recipe and make a batch for themselves, but they're caught by King Gregor.

22b. **Just a Tad Smarter** *by Bruce Talkington.***1/2

The Gummies team up with Duke Igthorn after Toadie's cousin Tadpole rallies the ogres against the Duke and orders them to destroy all the Gummiberry bushes.

23a. **If I Were You** *story by Tad Stones & Richard Mueller; teleplay by Richard Mueller.****

Igthorn uses Malsinger the wizard's Star of Lakloon to switch bodies with Tummi and learn the Gummies' secrets. Once in Gummi Glen, the Bears surprise him with a birthday party, where he suffers from Zummi's fireworks and Grammi's marplenut cookies.

23b. Eye of the Beholder *by Mark Zaslove*.****

Marzipan, a duchess who is marrying King Gregor, is really a witch who has put Dunwyn under her spell. Only Sunni knows Marsipan's secret, but a bewitched Calla won't let Sunni expose her.

24a. Presto Gummo *by Bruce Reid Schaefer and Tad Stones*.**

When Tummi makes a wooden Gummi medallion to practice magic, Cubbi rigs up some tricks to make Tummi think the medallion really works. Convinced he's a wizard, Tummi takes on the ogres.

24b. A Tree Grows in Dunwyn *by Mark Zaslove*.*****

The trolls from "Over the River and Through the Trolls" tunnel out of Gregor's dungeon and seek the apple tree where they've hidden their stolen gold. But Calla and the Gummies have taken it to the castle as a present for King Gregor on Monarch's Day. The Trolls follow the Gummies to their home and hold them hostage until they retrieve the gold.

25. Day of the Beevilweevils *story by Mark Zaslove; teleplay by Bruce Talkington*.****

When a swarm of beevilweevils devastate the Gummiberry bushes, Gusto and Tummi take a long-range quick car to get some replacement bushes from South Gumpton at Fangwood Forest, but they're captured by talking mobile trees.

26a. Water Way to Go *story by Mark Zaslove & Tad Stones; teleplay by Bruce Reid Schaefer*.*****

Gusto wants to sketch Aquarianne, a mermaid whose monstrous pet Finwhippit comes to her aid whenever she blows her conch shell whistle. Igthorn captures her and uses the whistle to get the sea monster to attack Castle Dunwyn.

26b. Boggling the Bears *by Tad Stones*.**

Sunni makes friends with Ditto, a shape-changing Boggle on the run from a hungry wolf. Ditto calls his fellow Boggles inside Gummi Glen, where their shape-changing antics "boggle" the Bears.

27a. Close Encounters of the Gummi Kind *story by Bruce Talkington & Tad Stones; teleplay by Bruce Reid Schaefer*. ***1/2

Gusto builds a wind-up Gummi Bear decoy that instead draws the attention of Igthorn and the ogres, some woodcutters, and Sir Tuxford and his knights. Their search for the decoy leads the to Gummi Glen.

27b. Snows Your Old Man *story by Tad Stones & Ted Perry; teleplay by Bruce Talkington*.***

Tummi, Sunni and Cubbi discover the reason for an unusually-long winter in Dunwyn: a Norse frost giant named Chillbeard wants it to stay cold.

28a. Mirthy Me *by Bruce Reid Schaefer*.*

A sprite called a gigglin encourages the Gummies to play practical jokes on each other until they nearly destroy Gummi Glen.

28b. Gummi Dearest *by Bruce Talkington*.**

Cubbi fishes at Grimtooth Islet, the nesting grounds for gryphons. When a mervyn (baby gryphon) hatches, Gruffi has to return it to its mother, who thinks Cubbi is her child.

29. The Knights of Gummadoon *story by Bruce Talkington and Tad Stones; teleplay by Tad Stones*.****

The Gummi Bears discover the city of Gummadoon, which appears for one day every hundred years. The ancient Gummies who live there distrust humans, and they put Cavin in their dungeon. When Cubbi tries to free Cavin, he is branded a traitor and has to endure a trial by combat against Sir Plucki, the greatest Knight of Gummadoon. Meanwhile, Duke Igthorn attacks Gummadoon with an army of ogres — with their strength increased by Gummiberry juice!



RABBITS, RHYTHM AND RHAPSODY:
Bugs on Broadway!

By Thomas M. Shim

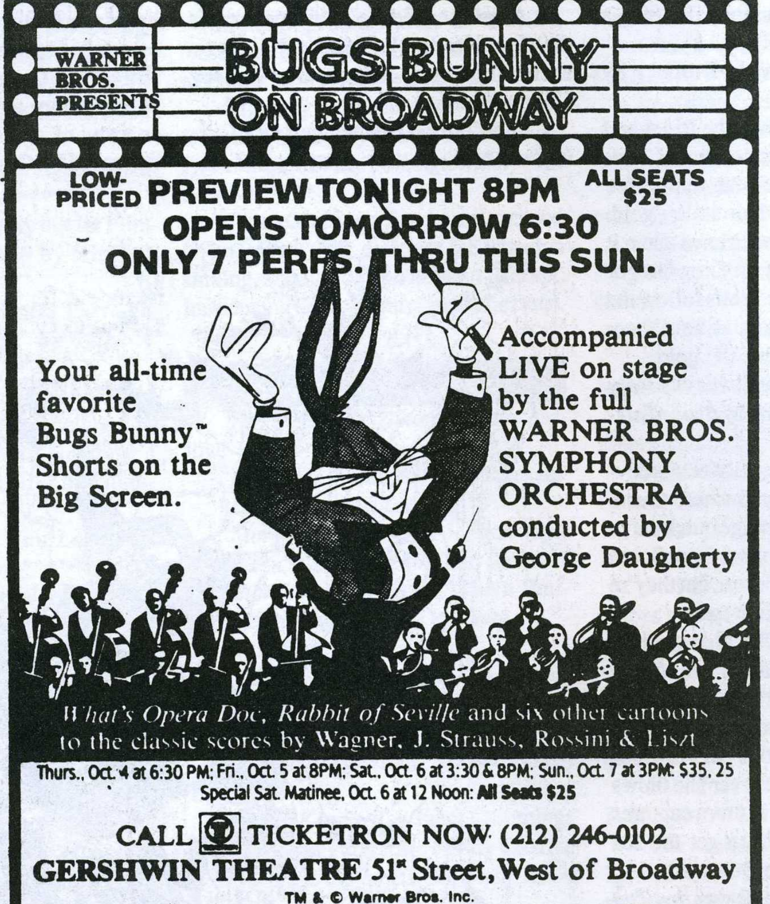
Late last September, whilst lazily brushing my teeth one early morning, hoping my carpool wouldn't be on time (not unlikely), a strange thing happened as I finished up my daily dose of Deborah Norville on the "Today" show. The phenomenon that followed, the image that flickered before me that fateful day, was so novel, so esoteric, so eclectically perverse, I had to literally wipe my eyes a couple of times to be convinced this was real, had to remind myself I had toothpaste in my mouth before I could gag.

Three words was all it took. "Bugs Bunny on Broadway!" a voice somewhere seemed to cheer.

It was as if Heaven herself had woken up that moment and said, "Eh, let's give the guy a break."

And thus did I find out about this mega-spectacular that was to fill the 2,000-seat Gershwin for the first two weeks in October. Yes, you heard it right the first time: *Bugs Bunny on Broadway*. As I sat there, mesmerized that such a thing could even be possible, the details began to seep in: "Your favorite animated shorts! Shown live, on the big screen! The way they were meant to be seen! And accompanied by"—and this was the clincher—"the 65-piece Warner Bros. Orchestra!" I started to feel faint (it was probably the toothpaste), but steadied myself long enough to hear the phone number, and commit it to memory. "Celebrate Bugs's 50th Anniversary in a grand way! Previews October 3rd; opening performance, October 4th! Don't miss it!" Were they kidding?

The loud horn from the car outside—it had been blasting about ten times now—finally rattled me from my daze.



Unbelievably, it hadn't been a dream. The tickets came from Teletron the next week; I'd ordered three for me and two (ahem) highly intelligent friends. When the day of the premiere came, I got the tickets out of the safe deposit box the morning before (I'm kidding!), and guarded them like the gold they were to me.... Okay, so I dumped them into my bag. I was still excited beyond belief: I mean, this was *real!*

After school, I met Kim (a guy) and Chris (she's a girl) at the 7th Ave. subway station on 51st St. at around 6:15, two hours before showtime. They were about as hyped as I was, and we pretty much raced to the theatre as fast as we could when—boom!—we ran right into a wall of people. Frankly, we had chosen the opening because, fans though we were, we didn't think the show would last even the two weeks.

Granted, Bugs Bunny's good, but Andrew Lloyd Webber he ain't. Yet here, right before our eyes (and feet) was a promising sign, to say the least: a literal throng of ticketholders, not one of them below their twenties mind you, waiting on a line two blocks long, and wide, to get into what our naive little trio had considered an obscure, on-the-fringe venture.

We'd learned our lesson, just like Elmer and Yosemite before us. *Never underestimate the Rabbit.*

It took us almost fifteen minutes just to get through the front gates, but the reviews and posters outside kept us occupied. *Meet Me in St. Louis* had closed, and *Fiddler on the Roof* was opening in November; meanwhile, Bugs, in conductor garb, was leading us on our merry way. Glowing columns from the *News*, the *Post*, *Newsday*, even the *Times* had all been blown up and posted, hawking the fun promised inside.

If you've never been in the Gershwin, it's plain beautiful—everything from the hanging chandeliers and double spi-

ral stairways, down to the plush hallways and illustrated, tapestried walls. There was something of a makeshift souvenir stand on the top floor, and we fought with other patrons to grab our share of caps, T-shirts, and posters. At the aisle entrance, we were each given a copy of the night's "Playbill." (Bugs Bunny on the cover of a "Playbill"?—I couldn't stand it.) On entering the stage proper, we were hit square in the eyes by the immensity of not only the arena, but the crowd.

"Man...the Bugster's really hit the big time at last," Kim managed to blurt out for all of us. (Hey, no more Mickey Mouse jokes for *this* lapine jester.)

An usher led us to our seats (seventh row, orchestra!), and we pretty much sat on our hands waiting for the show to start. Most of the audience were in suits and ties or in dresses, what with tonight being the opening and all. The few children there seemed to be on surprisingly good behavior. And the whole place was abuzz in dizzy anticipation; clearly this was a partisan crowd.

After a pensive five-minute delay, the lights finally dimmed to the clamor of applause. The din only grew louder as the curtain rose to reveal the *ad hoc* Warner Bros. Orchestra in its full splendor— wiping out any lingering doubts that this was not some grand practical joke.

Out from stage left stepped our host for the evening, George Daughterty, a young guy that looked congenial enough, decked out in an impressive outfit befitting a tested conductor. He took his place on the podium, raised his baton high, and out of this highly trained, utterly professional 65-piece philharmonic arose... the wild and wacky Merrie Melodies theme.

It was sheer music to our ears. And as good as the rest of the program was—and it was very, *very* good—nothing could quite match that first rush experienced by hearing this: a song we'd all heard before, hundreds of times on television, leading off every other Warner Bros. cartoon, ever since we as babes were first plopped down in front of the set by busy and frustrated parents who just wanted us to, for *God's sake, shut up!* for a while. And we shut up, and watched...and were hooked.

Only this time, we were hearing this "throwaway tune" alongside thousands of people, who'd *paid* for the privilege, conducted and performed by the best—live. It was simply unbelievable.

But the rest of the show was stupendous, too, don't let me mislead you. Shown were such classic shorts as Chuck Jones's paean comoedia to Rossini, "Rabbit of Seville" (1950), where Bugs gives Elmer a shave he'll never forget. Also screened was Bob Clampett's vicous parody of Disney's **Fantasia**, "A Corny Concerto" (1944), which introduced countless kids to Strauss's *The Blue Danube* (remember "da-da-da-da-dum...quack-quack, quack-quack"?).

These were mixed with such lesser-known pleasures as Jones's "High Note" (1960), where little musical notes get drunk with friendly treble clefs, and Robert McKimson's "What's Up, Doc?" (1951), in which Bugs tell how it all started.

In two more Jones-directed musicals, Bugs actually got to conduct the orchestra from his own podium in "Baton Bunny" (1959); while as Leopold Stokowski, he successfully tortured a pompous opera singer in "Long-Haired Hare" (1949). Friz Freleng's "Rhapsody Rabbit" (1946)—featuring Liszt's 2nd *Hungarian Rhapsody*—got two of the biggest laughs of the evening; first, when Bugs rids himself of a coughing member of the audience—by grabbing a gun and shooting him, dead; and second, when a phone rings from inside the piano Bugs is playing. Bugs answers it: "Who? Franz Liszt? Nah, never hoid of 'im."

Each and every one of these cultural paradigms of mid-20th-century Americana was proudly projected on the three-story-high screen on-stage, finally freed of years of confinement to the small tube—each classic bigger-than-life, presented as they were always meant to be. And adorning each of these paragons of the Golden Age of Hollywood animation was the lush musical accompaniment of this Warner Bros. Orchestra, filling out every individual score with a richness perceivable only through a live performance.

Interspersed throughout the evening were straight-arrow performances by Daugherty and the orchestra of the original classical pieces that inspired the music of the cartoons. Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* and Von Suppe's *Morning, Noon, and Night in Vienna* were among the selctions, as were Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, Strauss's *Tales of the Vienna Woods*, and Lizst's *Hungarian Rhapsody, No.2*. Although competently done and pleasant enough, these interludes were nonetheless slow and tedious, and clashed unfortunately with their visual counterparts. But at their best, these intervals did serve as something of a geenerous respire from all that tiring action.

The climax of the evening, however, was not to be denied. When the conductor lifted his baton for the last time, the screen lit up with one of the most cherished titles in Warner cartoon-dom: Chuck Jones's 1957 masterpiece, "What's Opera, Doc?" The cheers and applause reached an all-night high as the credits flashed over the strains of vintage Wagner. Unbridled laughter gave way to sheer awe, as before our eyes unfolded (once again) Jones's six-minute condensation of Wagner's infamous 36-hour *Ring* Cycle. Impressive and daunting in and of itself, the film's re-projection and re-scoring to even more magnificent proportions caused all senses of the audience to be boggled beyond recognition. When the experience eventually came to its inevitable but undesired close, the exhausted crowd could only applaud—long and long—with the reverence due such a



priceless work of art.

The show's run, by the way, was highly successful. The initial two-week stay, about whose length we had originally so much doubt, sold out before the weekend. The two-week extension was also sold out within the week tickets were put on sale. The only limit preventing still further shows was the commitment of the Gershwin to the producers of the forthcoming *Fiddler on the Roof*...not to mention the obligations of *Bugs on Broadway* to its nationwide tour.

As if to prognosticate these events, the evening at-hand had been a resounding succcess in its own right. But when all seemed said and done, one more surprise was in store. The talented artists responsible for these comic classics were paid their just due in a brief monologue by conductor Daughtery:

Carl Stalling, and his orchestrator Milt Franklyn, who together and in tandem created the remarkable music recognized instantly as "the Warner Bros. sound.";

Treg Brown, creator of the famous "whoop," "ffweep," and "yuggity-yuggity-yuggity," who for over 25 years single-handedly commandeered the sound effects department at Warner Bros;

The indomitable Mel Blanc, whose mammoth vocal talents breathed life into virtually all the Warner Bros. characters for half-a- century;

Storymen Michael Maltese, Warren Foster, and Tedd Pierce, who with wits as keen as daggers, kept the puns and gags coming without ever missing a beat;

And of course, the directors. From vaudevillian Friz Freleng to intellectual Chuck Jones; from wildman Bob Clampett to showman Robert McKimson; from sex-crazed Frank Tashlin to con artist Arthur Davis. And of course, the little guy who started it all by going out and creating the little grey hare in the first place: Tex Avery. With their respective animators, layout men, and background artists, they contributed their lives to doing one thing, and doing it all the best damnedest way possible: making people laugh.

Each artisan mentioned was a genuine master of his own craft, and contributed his own special talent to the making of these exemplars of animation. They were all clearly the best in the business, certainly the best at what they did so well.

Together they created a synergy the likes of which, sadly but wonderously, will never be witnessed again.

But then came the surprise. Introduced in front of our very eyes were Charles M. "Chuck" Jones and Isadore "Friz" Freleng, two of the creators of these forty-year-old masterpieces known as the Warner Bros. animated cartoons. Sitting right there in the third row, a mere twenty feet away from our trio, were two living monuments responsible for so much joy and laughter in the lives of millions of people worldwide.

The two elderly gentlemen humbly stood up to acknowledge the cheering throngs. Who could have imagined such a day would come when, after a half-century of neglect, scorn, ridicule, and criticism, their Herculean efforts as a legitimate artform would finally be recognized, and exalted? It was clear to see they were moved beyond belief, and we were too.

As the artists waved happily to their loving fans, a standing ovation—whose amplitude and length were immeasurable continued into the night.

Book Review

Emile Cohl: From Success to the Poor House

by Shamus Culhane

Emile Cohl; Caricature and film. Donald Crafton, 375 pp. 321 illustrations, Princeton University Press.

Donald Crafton put ten years of his life into a blockbuster of a biography of Emile Cohl, who has been called "The Father of Animation." The result was a book with meticulously detailed research. Crafton did not zero in on Cohl, but enriched his background by writing about the intellectual climate of a particular time, and adds information about Cohl's peers and their individual accomplishments in such a fashion as to give the reader a vivid picture of Cohl as a living, breathing person, working in an especially exciting time.

His writing style is a welcome relief from the circusposter style of some of our contemporary film historians who have managed to get published, and film theorists, whose ponderous writing styles obscure the original thoughts (if there were any).

Keeping track of Emile Cohl's checkered career, and the details of Parisian fin-de-siecle artistic and intellectual life, the deeds of various people who impinged on Cohl's life, their accomplishments, as opposed to his efforts, all this makes for a difficult book to absorb. It is not a coffee-table tome for scanning while the wife gets ready for a night on the town.

Crafton portrays Cohl as a timid person in his human relationships, yet very aggressive when driven by sheer curiousity. When aroused by his browsing, he seems capable of prodigious effort, with little regard for the end result. In a way this was a Godsend because it led Cohl to two major careers.

One, as a political caricaturist, then, at the nadir of that career, when most artists would have faded into obscurity, Cohl became interested in photography, both still and motion picture. When his venture in still portraits proved so unprofitable that he could not maintain his own household, he went on to find a job as a script writer at Gaumount, a leading French production company that was churning out pictures for the burgeoning crop of motion picture theaters which were springing up like mushrooms, not only in France, but all over the world.



Later he became a director, first doing "trick" films, using the stop-motion of objects, then tenatively exploring the animation of drawings. From the first screening, this facet of his art was a success. Ironically enough, most of his pictures were made to advertise various products or companies, very similar to our TV commercials.

The quality of his films was so great that Cohl was invited to join a production house, Eclair, in Fort Lee, N.J. His enthusiasm quickly cooled when he realized the full intensity of the hostility of Thomas Edison and a group of his unsavoury cronies. Their aim was to establish a monopoly of the motion picture business, even to the extent of trying to get legislation preventing foreigners from working on American films in any capacity.

Edison's chicanery failed, and Cohl worked ten years at Eclair. Shortly before he returned to France, he became associated with George McManus, who was famous as the creator of a comic-strip, "The Newlyweds." While the animated cartoons were successful, most of the kudos seemd to have gone to McManus.

Crafton then recounts, with obvious sympathy, how Cohl left Eclair, and went back to France because of sickness in the family, only to be confronted by World War One.

During the war, and later, in his old age, Cohl gradually was unable to find work, and became destitute. Then followed a period in the 1930's when he began to be recognized as a key figure in French art history. In 1936 the Societe d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie National awarded Cohl 4,000 francs and a medal.

It was said when Emile Cohl became inactive in the animation field, the American animators took over and obliterated the French animators. People preferred to see Flip the Frog, Koko the Clown, Felix the Cat, and above all, Mickey Mouse.

The reader will be moved by Crafton's version of Cohl's miserable end. The 4,000 franc award was soon dissipated in payment for hospital expenses which Cohl incurred because of an accident in which he suffered severe and extensive burns.

Crafton writes about Cohl's declining years with great compassion, as he acts out the old maxim that inventors and creators die poor.

The author has succeeded in writing an enormously important biography about Cohl, not only as a pioneer film-maker, but also as a human being.

The notes in the back of the book are copious, chronological, and detailed. Altogether Mr. Crafton has succeeded in accomplishing a superior piece of scholarship.

Animation in Academia:

How one English teacher Uses Cartoons as a Teaching Aid!

by Tim Smith

I remembered being six years old and knowing no greater pleasure in life than the sight of Yogi Bear trying to twinkletoe past Ranger Smith's cabin in just one more ill-fated attempt to escape the confines of Jellystone Park. It wasn't until recent years, when I became an educated animation aficionado, that I realized it wasn't respectable to like Hanna-Barbera. Of course I was ashamed, but I decided to branch out.

My passion for the animated cartoon now embraces toons ranging from Gertie the Dinosaur to the as-yet-unconceived future offspring of Bart Simpson but, scorn me if you must, I still include Huckleberry Hound and Snagglepuss among my favorites.

Of course, being a high school English teacher, I have a built in rationalization for Snagglepuss. In my line, the ability to spout Shakespeare assures instant credibility for anyone, but even the enlightened mind of Shakespeare probably would have struggled with the possibility that the diverse spectrum of actors who would give voice to his words for future generations might include a mountain lion. "Great Caesar's Ghost!" and "Heavens to Murgatroyd!"

The relationship between animation and the English language is one to which I have devoted untold hours over the past five years. It was about that long ago that a bizarre idea first occurred to me. As I immersed myself in the work of artistic geniuses such as Avery, Jones, and Freleng, I began to appreciate their exemplary use of many of the literary concepts I have been charged with teaching my students. Concepts such as irony, pun, caricature, and parody are conveyed as effectively through animation as through any written medium.

Most kids love cartoons. I love cartoons. I've accumulated thousands of them. The combinations of all those factors fanned within me the fire of a burning question. Could animation be used in an effective and comprehensive approach to teaching high school English? Or would the mere suggestion of such an idea inevitably lead to the dropping of the administrative anvil squarely upon my figurative head?



The amount of time and effort invested in the project between conception and execution was considerable. During the first few years after the idea's inception there was an additional purpose circulating in my mind during every cartoon I watched. I started an extensive index card file where I carefully cataloged my notes and observations regarding what animated material might most effectively be used to illustrate and teach the concepts I wanted my students to learn.

As fate would have it, the point in time where I felt the animation concept was ready for implementation happened to coincide with some major philosophical changes in the teaching of language arts.

Over the last few years we have seen a shift in focus from a teacher centered classroom to a student centered classroom. My role has become less that of an instructor and more that of a facilitator.

Four basic areas of language arts skills, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking, have emerged as the primary objectives around which student activities are planned. There is more of an emphasis on skills and techcniques than there is on specific subject matter and that change opened some doors of opportunity regarding how I could use animation as a means for providing my students with meaningful and engaging opportunities to refine their skills.

As I have developed and adapted my concept I have been able to increasingly demonstrate the successful use of animation as a topic around which effective activities can be developed to provide worthwhile and enjoyable opportunities to read, write, listen, and speak, and I've enjoyed a positive response from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators.

The most rewarding and successful educational environment is one where students are enjoying what they're doing and actively applying themselves at the same time. Allow me to illustrate an example of this with a recent class project, this one based on the innovative work of the Fleischer brothers and their studio

which flourished during the 20's and 30's before being crushed by Paramount's corporate sledge hammer in 1942.

One student had planned a class presentation which dealt with the evolution of the chracter of Betty Boop. He started with her origins as Bimbo the dog's poodle-girlfriend, discussed the metamorphosis to a totally human sex-pot, and finished with the conservative changes forced upon poor Betty by the Hays Production Code of 1934 when she was stripped of her sexuality and forced to exchange her garter for an apron.

This student then espoused the theory that of all the characters in the Fleischer stable, none was ever subjected to a more devastating plight than Bimbo. True, he said, Popeye was often forced to undergo the most thorough of trouncings before resorting to his spinach solution. And Superman had to endure the terror of having his secret love suffer tortures ranging from railroad track tie-downs to foreign agent abductions. And alas poor Koko the Clown, no claustrophobic he, was forced to live inside an inkwell. However, none of these ignominious fates could possibly compare to that of Bimbo who had to endure the traumatic shock of seeing his spouse gradually change species before his very eyes. Man's best friend indeed! It was one of those sad-but-true tales that, within the realm of the animated world, is allowed to become sad, true, *and* funny.

At that point the student embarked upon a series of rhetorical questions which played upon the analogy he had created. "Think of the implications," he queried his classmates, "that such an occurrence might have on you. Imagine for a minute that your boyfriend or girlfriend actually changed into a dog. Girls, how might his affect your prom plans? How do you explain to your family that your boyfriend doesn't think drinking out of the toilet is necessarily a 'bad thing'? Guys, what do you say to your friends when they ask why your date always rides with her head outside thet window?"

And from there the student went into a monologue of dilemmas directed at bothsexes. Allow me to share a sampling of some of the better ones. The girls were faced with tough questions like, "How would your girlfriends react to the fact that you were seeing a dog? How would *you* react to their consistent complaints that he was taking advantage of his new four-legged stature to look up their dresses? Would his persistent habit of lurking around the bio lab during cat dissections threaten your relationship? Will your most romantic moments be compromised by the fact there he can no longer sweat and must rely upon panting for relief of excess body heat?"

And for the guys, "Would the annoying staccato click of metal on marble as you walk down the hall eventually cause you to demand she wear your class ring on a chain around her neck rather than on her paw? Suppose an impulsive canine urge to chew renders her straw inoperable, and she is forced to lap up her lunch milk in a manner your friends consider to be sexually suggestive. Would this, to you, be a source of pride or humiliation?" All are certainly questions capable of boggling any teenage mind.

Although this is just one of the several memorable instances of vibrant interactions between my students and animation that I have witnessed, I think it provides an excellent example of how the genre has the potential to spark student interest and creativity.

In my professional analysis of the aforementioned Fleischer presentation I felt the student had been successful on three very distinct levels. Given the evolution of Betty Boop as a topic, he had been charged with effectively conveying said topic to his classmates. Having dealt thoroughly with the original task, he proceeded along an analytical path to use the content of his topic, along with supplementary information on the other Fleischer charcters, to develop a pertinent, interesting, and amusing new theory. Then finally, the student took the project down a wholly creative path, and composed a humorous and satirical monologue, drawing upon both the concept of a human-dog relationship and the high school experience which he shared with his audience.

The third level of the student's work, while originally springing from a concept based in animation, is actually not animiation specific at all. The satire works on its own level. It could be appreciated by an audeince that had never even heard of Betty Boop.

And therein lies the greated potential of animation in education. In addition to the "history of animation" knowledge my students are acquiring, both directly and indirectly, the timeless fascination which animation inspires in so many of us is serving as a catalyst to motivate and inspire them to more actively engage themselves in the developement of a broad spectrum of academic and personal skills. Hopefully every one of my students leaves the class feeling smarter than the average bear!

Just in the Nick of Time:

A review of the new Nick at Nite Toons

By Harry McCracken

When I heard that Nickelodeon was planning a block of original animated programs for Sunday mornings, I wasn't sure what to expect. While any network that dares to run black-and-white Bosko cartoons in prime-time is OK by me, most of Nick's animated programming — like its reruns of **Heathcliff** and **Inspector Gadget** — has been nothing to get excited about. In addition, much of the network's live-action programming has a phony tone of forced irreverence that's kind of wearying, at least if you're over the age of twelve.

Nick's three new cartoon shows seem to be suffering some production problems — each show has aired at least one repeat, four weeks into the season — but otherwise they're off to a promising start. **Doug, Rugrats,** and **The Ren and Stimpy Show** are all worth watching, whether you're a kid, a parent, or merely a fan of inventive animation.

A Sunday morning spent watching Nickelodeon's new cartoons begins with **Doug**, a program created by Jim Jinkins that's the least unusual of the Nicktoons trio. Indeed, **Doug** is positively old-fashioned: it reminded me of an animated **Leave It To Beaver.**

Doug himself, midway between Wally and the Beav in age, is a nice kid — unconfident and self-conscious, but always well meaning. His supporting cast includes Roger, a leather-jacketed wiseass (think Eddie Haskell); Skeeter, Doug's best friend; and Patti Mayonnaise, a cute girl who Doug has a crush on (she seems to like him, too). Doug's dog, Porkchop, is a wild, Snoopy-like creature who provides the major element of fantasy in this otherwise down-to-earth suburban setting.

Doug's adventures are the sort of things that happened to Beaver Cleaver, David and/or Ricky Nelson, and one or more members of the Brady Bunch: he thinks his nose is too big, his dog runs away, he builds a volcano for the science fair, he frets about making a fool of himself at the school dance. Every story teaches Doug and the young viewer a gentle moral, usually having to do with Doug not being as unpopular, ugly, or incompetent as he sometimes thinks he is.

Visually, **Doug** is an attractive, well-animated show with at least two curious aspects to it. The first one is instantly apparent: in Doug's world, people come in some mighty odd skin colors. Doug himself is a pretty ordinary caucasian shade of pink, but Patti Mayonnaise is bright orange, and Roger is a sort of fluorescent yellow.



The other visual oddity is less obvious: most of the time, the characters only have one eyebrow at a time. (Once in a while they have two; sometimes they have none.) It's actually best to forget this fact, since once you catch on to it, watching **Doug** can quickly dissolve into staring at the characters' foreheads in order to see which eyebrow they have at any given time.

Doug's quirky graphic style seems to suggest a hipness that the characters and stories don't deliver. That's not a criticism — in fact, the best thing about **Doug** is that it's so straightforward. It's a nice show about a nice kid. Parents will probably find less to interest themselves here than in the other two Nicktoons, but I'll bet they'd rather their kids tried to emulate Doug than a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle or Bart Simpson.

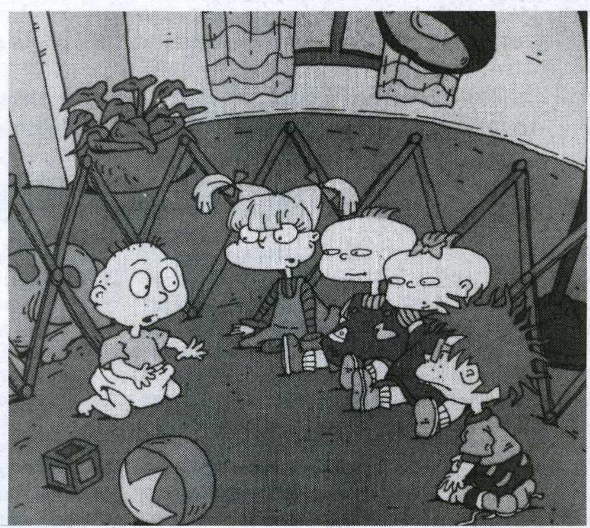
Speaking of Bart, the next show on the Nickelodeon schedule is **Rugrats**, a program produced by Klasky-Csupo, the studio responsible for **The Simpsons.** The central character is Tommy Pickles, an inquisitive baby boy (he celebrates his first birthday in one of the show's episodes). While Tommy can't speak a word of English, he's fluent in babytalk, with which he communicates with the several infants and small children who make up the **Rugrats.**

They discuss issues that are of high importance if you're a baby — whether or not eating dog food will turn you into a dog, for instance. (The only way to find out for sure is to eat some, which they do.) In another story, the Rugrats get taken to a kiddie movie (a hilarious **Care Bears** parody), but escape in order to find the Godzilla-like creature that a TV commercial had told them was at the theater. Whatever the kids do, their yuppie parents are in the background, consulting baby-raising manuals and happily oblivious to the conversations and schemes of their little ones.

If all this sounds a little familiar, it may be because it bears some resemblance to the **Look Who's Talking** movies — or perhaps you recall Sheldon Mayer's *Sugar and Spike* comic books, which brilliantly explored the same basic conceit. **Rugrats** doesn't make as much of the idea as Mayer did, but it's at least as amusing as the average live-action sitcom. (The fine voice cast includes situation comedy veterans like Jack Riley, Melanie Chartoff, and David Doyle.)

The show's visual style is recognizably that of the same people who produce **The Simpsons,** but **Rugrats** has an intentionally rough-hewn, ungainly look that's all its own. This ugliness is somehow appealing in the case of the Rugrats

themselves: they're funny, unsentimental caricatures of real children. Tommy's parents, on the other hand, look like a husband-and-wife clown team — his dad has violet hair and favors polka-dot ties; his mother seems to share Bozo's hairdresser.



If there's a significant problem with **Rugrats**, it's that the show's promising concept doesn't seem completely worked out. The baby's-eye view of the world that gives the series its best material isn't explored enough; sometimes the perspective is that of the parents, and sometimes it doesn't seem to be any particular viewpoint at all.

In addition, the level of fantasy isn't consistent. Somehow, the notion that Tommy and the other rugrats might communicate in baby babble is plausible; the idea of Tommy hiding a screwdriver in a special bracket on his highchair, the better to make his escapes with, is not.

I don't think it's coincidental that **The Ren and Stimpy Show** is the final show in the Nicktoons morning. This is the program that late-sleeping adults — especially those who remember John Kricfalusi's work on **Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures** — will want to check out. You thought the new **Mighty Mouse** was quirky? Ren and Stimpy, created and produced by Kricfalusi, makes Mighty Mouse look like Strawberry Shortcake.

The title characters have been aptly compared to a post-nuclear holocaust Rocky and Bullwinkle. Stimpy is an tubby, mornic cat who talks with Larry Fine's nasal voice, thanks to the uniquely talented voice artist Billy West; Ren, voiced by Kricfalusi, is an ugly, easily agitated Chihuahua. So far, there isn't much a supporting cast, Stimpy's "magic nose goblins" (don't ask) excepted.

While **Doug** and **Rugrats** stick to a two-stories-per-episode format, **Ren and Stimpy** is a mixture of self-contained stories, serialized adventures, bridging sequences, and animated pseudo-commercials, in the style of a 1960s Hanna-Barbera or Jay Ward program. Indeed, the whole show bears the same twisted symbiotic relationship to classic TV cartoon shows that cyberpunk bears to classic space-opera science fiction. The soundtrack seems to be drawn from cheap stock-music recordings of the 1960s; the backgrounds often look like they came directly from an early **Yogi Bear** cartoon. Sometimes, the show uses held drawings in a way that's reminiscent of **Crusader Rabbit** and other very early TV cartoons.

What makes the show more than a mere pastiche of old TV animation is the bizarre, uniquely 1990s spin that Kricfalusi and his artists give it. In one story, Ren becomes ill — grotesquely, visibly ill — and Stimpy attempts to nurse him back to health. The action is built around Ren's expressions of excruciating pain, the spongebath Stimpy gives him when he becomes "sticky with filth," and other material that never would have made it into a 1960s TV cartoon.

Some of the show's funniest moments are its fake 1960s animated TV commercials, including one for a toy called Log ("It's big, it's heavy, it's wood!") and one in which Ren and Stimpy plug that breakfast favorite, Powdered Toast. One episode shows us the hysterical opening credits for Stimpy's favorite TV show, the ever-popular Muddy Mudskimmer show.

Ren and Stimpy is the most sophisticated of the Nicktoons trio in many ways; it's also the one that relies most heavily on cheerful gross-out humor. Rarely has wit based on cat litter and hairball references been so central to a TV program. After two episodes it's premature to say how limiting this will be; in any event, Kricfalusi's work never bores, which is quite an achievement in as predictable and unimaginative a field as television animation.

It would be nice to wrap this review up with some sort of ranking of the three Nicktoons series, but that's hard to do, since each is very much its own, distinctive creation. All three programs are refreshing antidotes to the merchandise-oriented shows that infest the broadcast networks' Saturday morning schedules.



ANIMATO FILM POLL

Back by popular demand, here is the official *Animato* film poll. If your favorite films aren't represented here, perhaps you should vote!

Once again, please forgive us for not listing directors and for printing this in such a small typeface but that allows us to include as much of each list as possible.

To cast your ballots or to update your old lists, send your top ten (in order) for each category to *Animato*, PO Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238. Remember that you can vote for films not on these lists - who knows, you may start a groundswell!

THEATRICAL SHORTS

1. Duck Amuck
2. Little Rural Riding Hood
3. One Froggy Evening
4. What's Opera, Doc?
5. Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 Century
6. The Band Concert
7. Duck! Rabbit! Duck!
8. Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs
9. Rabbit of Seville
10. Bad Luck Blackie
11. Snow White
12. Robin Hood Daffy
13. The Dover Boys
14. Popeye Meets Sinbad
15. Tummy Trouble
16. The Great Piggy Bank Robbery
17. Popeye Meets Ali Baba's 40 Thieves
18. King Size Canary
19. Bimbo's Initiation
20. Red Hot Riding Hood
21. The Old Mill
22. Wabbit Twouble
23. Minnie the Moocher
23. Book Revue
24. Lucky Ducky
25. Superman
26. Porky in Wackyland
27. Hareway to the Stars
28. The Mad Doctor
29. Russian Rhapsody
30. The Cat Who Hated People
31. Clock Cleaners
32. Mechanical Monsters
33. Roller Coaster Rabbit
34. Rabbit Seasoning
35. Fast and Furry-ous
36. Screwy Squirrel
37. Mad as a Mars Hare
38. Knighty Knight Bugs
39. Swing Shift Cinderella
40. The Skeleton Dance
41. Der Fuhrer's Face
42. Trick or Treat
43. Cookie Carnival
44. Mickey's Trailer
45. I Love to Singa
46. Lonesome Ghosts
47. A Wild Hare
48. Gerald McBoingboing
49. Kitty Kornered
50. Alladin's Lamp
51. Dizzy Red Riding Hood
52. Rooty Toot Toot
53. Scrappy's Art Gallery
54. Karnival Kid
55. High Note
56. Apple Andy
57. Lady Play Your Mandolin
58. Feed the Kitty
59. Let's Celebrake
60. Mickey's Follies
61. Solid Serenade
62. Scrappy's Television
63. Show Biz Bugs
64. Barber of Seville
65. Through the Mirror
66. Happy-Go-Nutty
67. Three Little Pups
68. How to Play Football
69. The Screwy Truant
70. Sh-h-h-h
71. Bugs Bunny Rides Again
72. Night Before Christmas
73. The Brave Tin Soldier
74. The Pointer
75. Betty Boop, MD
76. In My Merry Oldsmobile
77. The Duxorcist
78. The Hep Cat
79. Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips
80. Rugged Bear
81. The Poet and the Peasant
82. Dripalong Daffy
83. Little Red Riding Rabbit
84. Magical Maestro
85. My Favorite Duck
86. A Bear for Punishment
87. The Cat Concerto
88. Daffy Doc
89. Daffy Doodles
90. Buckaneer Bunny
91. Eugene the Jeep
92. Moving Day
93. The Sunshine Makers
94. The Two Mousketeers
95. Super Rabbit
96. Chips Ahoy
97. Uncle Tom's Cabana
98. Peace on Earth
99. Bacall to Arms
100. Hollywood Steps Out

INDEPENDENT SHORTS

1. The Wizard of Speed and Time
2. The Great Cognito
3. Bambi Meets Godzilla
4. Animato
5. KnickKnack
6. The Big Snit
7. Technological Threat
8. Futuropolis
9. Tin Toy
10. Quasi at the Quackadero
11. Closed Mondays
12. Broken Down Film
13. Anna and Bella
14. The Collector
15. Tango
16. Luxo, Jr.
17. Vincent
18. The Street
19. Flying Fur
20. The Critic
21. Ubu
22. Opera
23. Stanley and the Dinosaur
24. Van Kant Danz
25. Make Me Psychic
26. Elbowing
27. Jumping
28. Crac
29. And She Was
30. The Fly
31. The Cat Came Back
32. 25 Ways to Stop Smoking
33. Adventures of an *
34. The Devil's Ball
35. Seaside Woman
36. Your Face
37. Sunbeam
38. Furies
39. Sundae in New York
40. Rapid Eye Movements
41. Special Delivery
42. Pas de Deux
43. Frank Film
44. Lupo the Butcher
45. The Interview
46. Oil Spot and Lipstick
47. The Butterfly Ball
48. Skywhales
49. Jimmy the C
50. Tony DePeltrie
51. Film Film Film
52. Allegretto
53. The Farm
54. Mosaic
55. Housekeeper
56. Vixen and Hare
57. Closet Encounters of the Nerd Kind
58. Get a Job
59. How to Kiss
60. Snookles
61. Sand Castle
62. Hot Stuff
63. Marathon
64. Silias Mariner
65. Thank You Mask Man
66. Viewmaster
67. Bridge to Your Heart
68. Getting Started
69. Sing Beast Sing
70. Face Like a Frog
71. Opposites Attract
72. La Tendresse du Maudit
73. Chromasaurus
74. Istanbul (Not Constantinople)
75. French Windows
76. Money for Nothing
77. Anijam
78. Time Tripper
79. Ersatz
80. Moonbird
81. Sledgehammer
82. The Harlem Shuffle
83. Every Dog's Guide to Safety
84. The Adventures of Nick and Sugar
85. Cat's Cradle
86. Rarg
87. Rupert and the Frog Song
88. Big Time
89. Dinosaur
90. Genius of Love
91. Adventures of an Ant
92. Harpae
93. On Land, At Sea, In The Air
94. Man Who Planted Trees
95. Neighbors
96. Four Wishes
97. Leonardo da Vinci
98. Red Ball Express
99. (Who Will) Be My Gas?
100. When I'm Rich

FEATURE FILMS

1. Fantasia
2. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
3. Pinocchio
4. Yellow Submarine
5. Who Framed Roger Rabbit
6. The Secret of NIMH
7. Bambi
8. The Little Mermaid
9. Wizards
10. Watership Down
11. Heavy Metal
12. 101 Dalmations
13. Dumbo
14. Rock & Rule
15. Allegro Non Troppo
16. Tron
17. The Jungle Book
18. Laputa: Castle in the Sky
19. Lady and The Tramp
20. Warriors of the Wind
21. Be Forever Yamato
22. The Hobbit
23. Peter Pan
24. The Black Cauldron
25. Lensman
26. The Lord of the Rings
27. Castle of Cagliostro
28. The Last Unicorn
29. Three Caballeros
30. Robin Hood
31. Animal Farm
32. Akira
33. Adventures of Mark Twain
34. The Brave Little Toaster
35. An American Tail
36. Fire and Ice
37. Phoenix 2772
38. Raggedy Ann and Andy
39. Galaxy Express 999
40. Gay Puree
41. Animalympics
42. Cinderella
43. Mr. Bug Goes to Town
44. Song of the South
45. A Boy Named Charlie Brown
46. Fritz the Cat
47. My Neighbor Totoro
48. Return of the King
49. Great Mouse Detective
50. The Rescuers
51. Sleeping Beauty
52. Grendel Grendel Grendel
53. Iczer
54. Puss in Boots
55. The Fox and the Hound
56. The Plague Dogs
57. The Chipmunk Adventure
58. Fantastic Planet
50. Terra Hei
60. Sea Prince and Fire Child
61. The Land Before Time
62. A Man Called Flintstone
63. Macross: Do You Remember Love?
64. Panda and the Magic Serpent
65. Dirty Pair
66. Urusei Yatsura: Only You
67. The Wizard of Speed and Time
68. The Rescuers Down Under
69. Alice in Wonderland
70. Fun and Fancy Free
71. The Phantom Tollbooth
72. Crusher Joe
73. Coonskin
74. The Sword in the Stone
75. Vampire Hunter D
76. Make Mine Music
77. Snoopy Come Home
78. American Pop
79. Lupin III: Mamo
80. Twice Upon a Time
81. Saludos Amigos
82. Starchaser
83. Gulliver's Travels
84. The Aristocats
85. Heavy Traffic

TELEVISION SERIES

1. Bullwinkle / Rocky and His Friends
2. Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures
3. Dangermouse
4. Jonny Quest
5. George of the Jungle
6. Beany and Cecil
7. The Simpsons
8. The Flintstones
9. The Jetsons (old episodes)
10. Tiny Toon Adventures
11. DuckTales
12. Star Trek
13. Dungeons and Dragons
14. Starblazers
15. Dirty Pair
16. Robotech
17. Count Duckula
18. Lupin III
19. Top Cat
20. Kimba the White Lion
21. Underdog
22. Yogi Bear
23. Alf Tales
24. Chip and Dale's Rescue Rangers
25. Adventures of the Gummi Bears
26. The New Adventures of Winnie the Pooh
27. TaleSpin
28. The Misadventures of Ed Grimley
29. Space Ghost
30. Tom Terrific
31. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
32. The Real Ghostbusters
33. Astro Boy
34. Huckleberry Hound
35. Maple Town
36. Inspector Gadget
37. Cat's Eye
38. Hoppity Hooper
39. Roger Ramjet
40. Speed Racer
41. Fantastic Four
42. Herculoids
43. The Mighty Heroes
44. Garfield and Friends
45. The Eighth Man
46. Scooby Doo Where Are You?
47. Beetlejuice
48. The Gumby Show
49. Kissyfur
50. The Alvin Show
51. Cities of Gold
52. Dynomutt
53. Thundarr the Barbarian
54. Wally Gator
55. Thundercats
56. The New Adventures of Flash Gordon
57. Good Morning Spank
58. Mobile Suit Gundam
59. The Smurfs
60. The Mighty Orbots
61. Bananaman
62. Transformers
63. Orguss
64. Crusader Rabbit
65. G.I. Joe
66. Peter Potamus
67. Beany and Cecil (new episodes)
68. Muppet Babies
69. Bobby's World
70. Insert Assembly
71. Quick Draw McGraw
72. Secret Squirrel
73. Heathcliff and Friends
74. Galaxy High
75. The Hillbilly Bears
76. C.O.P.S.
77. Hong Kong Phooey
78. The Beatles
79. The Charlie Brown and Snoopy Show
80. Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventures

TELEVISION SPECIALS

1. How the Grinch Stole Christmas
2. Family Dog
3. A Charlie Brown Christmas
4. It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown
5. A Christmas Carol
6. A Doonesbury Special
7. Rikki Tikki Tavi
8. A Claymation Christmas
9. Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
10. Ziggy's Gift
11. Garfield's Nine Lives
12. Garfield's Halloween
13. Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol
14. Sport Goofy in Soccermania
15. The Snowman
16. Frosty the Snowman
17. Charlie Brown's All Stars
18. Meet the Raisins
19. Here Comes Garfield
20. A Pogo Special Birthday Special
21. Banjo the Woodpile Cat
22. Here Comes Peter Cottontail
23. The Lorax
24. The Devil and Daniel Mouse
25. Rudolph's Shiny New Year
26. Kotec the White Seal
27. A Soldier's Tale
28. 'Twas the Night Before Christmas
29. A Cosmic Christmas
30. The Mouse on the Mayflower
31. Daffy's Thanks for Giving Special
32. It's the Flashbeagle, Charlie Brown
33. Garfield Goes Hollywood
34. Christmas in July
35. Tattertown
36. Really Rosie and Chicken Soup
37. Tiny Tree
38. Cathy
39. It's a Mystery, Charlie Brown
40. Madeline
41. Garfield's Christmas
42. Babar and Father Christmas
43. The Flintstones Meet the Jetsons
44. The Bear Who Found Christmas
45. Year Without Santa Claus
46. A BC Thanksgiving
47. Carnival of the Animals
48. The 2000 Year Old Man
49. The Raisins: Sold Out!
50. Will Vinton's Claymation House of Horrors

T[cassette]NS ON TAPE

A VIDEO COLUMN BY MATTHEW HASSON

By Matthew Hasson

Instead of reviewing some of the more commonly available video titles such as the 12th re-packaging of MGM/UA Bugs Bunny collections, I thought it would be a refreshing departure to take a look at some titles that are currently available only in the Laserdisc format.

Laserdiscs are finally catching on in popularity and more stores are beginning to stock them. For those who are still unacquainted with the format, think of it as a giant CD player with pictures and sound that are superior to your standard VHS tape.

Like the CD player, the laserdisc has the ability to jump rapidly from any one part of the movie to another in a matter of seconds and back again, unlike the slow hunt-and-search method one must use when fast forwarding or rewinding a tape. This is especially handy when searching for individual titles in animation collections.

For full-length features, the film is segmented into "chapters" that are approximately 15-20 minutes in length and the scenes contained in each chapter are described on the disc's jacket. There are no visible breaks between chapters. They only become apparent when using the "skipping" feature to jump ahead.

Other features of Laserdiscs are multiple soundtracks, superior special effects and "book pages," which contain photographs and specially written text that can be viewed like a microfiche reader by simply pressing a frame-advance button. These are included in the special edition Criterion Collections of such classics as **The Wizard of Oz** and **Forbidden Planet.**

Now to the reviews:

KO-KO THE CLOWN

Republic Pictures, 70 min.

Recently released is this fine collection of Max Fleischer's classic *Out of the Inkwell* series. It is currently available only on Laserdisc from Republic Pictures, the same company that issued the excellent *Betty Boop Special Collector's Editions* a few years back. All these cartoons are silent, I mean *really* silent. A lot of vintage silent cartoons have been issued on public domain tapes in recent years, and they usually have some annoying canned music playing over them. This disc has absolutely nothing on the audio track. I recommend playing some unobtrusive instrumental music while watching this because it's hard to get into a story without some kind of audio stimulation.

What *Ko-Ko the Clown* lacks in sound is certainly made up for in the quality of the film prints. They are so well preserved that it's hard to believe they date back to the 1920's. Both the live action and animation is sharp, clear and remarkably free of film scratches that plague so many films from the silent era. It looks as if they were taken from the original nitrate film stock, although that does not seem likely. Nitrate film tends to disintegrate after several years or even explode if kept in cans for too long a period.

Interesting details to note are the "Inkwell Studios" logo which bears a strong resemblance to the King Features logo that appeared on the early 60's Popeye TV cartoons. I was somewhat puzzled by the fact that although this series is generally known as *Out of the Inkwell*, the title cards all read *Inkwell Imps*. The major difference in the look of these silent films and the "Talkartoons" series that followed is the backgrounds, or lack thereof. Photographs are used as backgrounds for scenes where characters interact with the "real world", but scenes which take place on the "drawing board" are usually against a stark white backdrop. Background objects like houses and trees are drawn with a minimum of detail. (I suppose this is to remind us that the action is taking place on a sheet of paper). For no apparent reason there are many scenes shot through a circular "window", like viewing through a telescope. This become an annoying cliche after a while. Here's a brief rundown of some of the film entries, all starring Ko-Ko (the correct spelling of his name is hyphenated) and his dog Fitz:

Chemical Ko-Ko: Oddly, this collection begins with the last Ko-Ko cartoon ever made. (The character would be revived a couple of years later as a sidekick to Betty Boop). Although Ko-Ko's "master" is usually Max Fleischer playing himself, this film has a bald bearded actor playing a scientist who invents a type of "transformation potion." He gives some of it to a black janitor who is immediately transformed into caucasian. The janitor then tosses away his mop and bucket and happily walks off to join the world of white people. An assortment of metamorphosis gags follow as Ko-Ko sells the potion to some cartoon critters with amusing results. The scientist then takes some of the potion himself and is transformed into a cartoon character. The film ends with him being pulled into the inkwell with Ko-Ko and Fitz.

Ko-Ko's Big Sale: Ko-Ko and Fitz are traveling salesmen. At one point Fitz gets all blackened by a smokestack and does a "mammy" take. It's interesting to see a silent cartoon making fun of the first "talkie", **The Jazz Singer**, which came out the previous year. Sound would come to Fleischer cartoons a few months later, bringing this series to an end.

Ko-Ko's Hypnotism: Ko-Ko and

Fitz are hypnotized by their master animator (not Max Fleischer) into doing some tricky stunts. When the animator puts a pair of giant plastic eyeballs on his face he looks just like Judge Doom in the climatic final scene of **Who Framed Roger Rabbit**.

Ko-Ko's Reward: Ko-Ko and Fitz go in search of Max's missing daughter at an amusement park. There are some nice shots of them superimposed on live action footage of 1920's amusement park rides. Eventually they discover Max's daughter has made herself into a cartoon character and was with them in the inkwell all along.

THE COMPLETE SUPERMAN CARTOONS OF MAX AND DAVE FLEISCHER

2 Disc set. Image Entertainment Inc.

The title of this set should truthfully add "...and Famous Studios." The first nine titles are Fleischer productions and the remaining eight were completed by Famous Studios under the supervision of Izzy Sparber, Seymour Kneitel and Dan Gordon. The high budget quality is maintained throughout the series, and the departure of the Fleischers after **Terror on the Midway** does not seem to affect the look or style of the films at all. It's possible Sparber and Kneitel had already been the true Directors, but Dave Fleischer always billed himself as "Director" even though he was actually the Producer.

The first thing I want to mention about this collection is the quality of the prints. For years the only copies of these cartoons available on video were taken from old 16mm public domain prints that had deteriorated badly. Anyone who has tapes of these dark, faded prints should toss them in the garbage immediately and get this collection instead. The quality is outstanding. The colors and contrast are so brilliant you would think they went back and re-filmed the original cels and backgrounds. Cable viewers who have seen some of these broadcast on the Disney Channel a few months ago will know what I'm talking about.

Laserdisc is the best source for this collection, although a small company called Video Rarities has issued a version of it on VHS. (I previously had a copy of the tape version and the quality of the transfer was noticeably inferior to the Laserdisc. It comes with a cheap, Xeroxed cover and the recording looked like 2nd or 3rd generation. By the way, I have recently leaned that Bosko video, whose quality product has beenreviwed here before, have obtained original prints of the Superman films and will be releasing them on video by the end of the year - supposedly in even a better condition than the disc.).

Another advantage of Laserdisc is digitally enhanced audio, which is especially noticeable on **Volcano**. The rumbling of the erupting volcano and the earthquakes have a "sensurround" feel when played through a good set of speakers.



My favorite episode is **Mechanical Monsters** with it's "tranformer" type robots. Their design is slightly reminiscent of the housecleaning robots in Chuck Jones' **Doggone Modern**. The final scenes take place in the villain's underground factory with Lois Lane about to be dropped into a bubbling vat of molten steel. The animation of the molten metal and flame shadows dancing on the cavernous walls are particularly outstanding and may be the best animation the Fleischer studio has ever done. **Terror on the Midway** falls slightly below the others in print quality, as does **The Mummy Strikes**. The negatives for these two were probably unavailable, but they are still superior to those old, dark 16mm prints.

Most of the later episodes produced by Famous Studios contain World War II propaganda, notably **Japoteurs, 11th Hour, Secret Agent** and **Jungle Drums** (which has a cameo appearance by Adolph Hitler). Of course, if Superman really fought in World War II he could have beaten the Nazis and Japanese singlehandedly and been back in time to write the story for the afternoon edition.

As for the stories, they pretty much hold true to the style of the Superman comic book stories of the 40s: Lois Lane gets into danger while trying to get a story and Superman shows up just in time to rescue her. She then runs back to the Daily Planet office and gets all the credit for the story, leaving poor Clark Kent out in the cold. Clark gets scooped by Lois in every story except **The Mummy Srtikes** (only because she is unable to type with both hands in casts). It's amazing Perry White doesn't fire him. And then there's his secret identity. Lois never makes the connection between him and Superman, even when he practically tells her. "How did you get here?" she asks Clark when he mysteriously appears in Superman's place at the end of **Magnetic Telescope**. "Oh, thanks to Superman", wink wink. The most ridiculous example comes in **Destruction, Inc.** where Clark disguises himself as an elderly night watchman with white wig and mustache. Lois pulls them off and says "you can't fool me, Clark Kent." Boy, if it weren't for those glasses. . .

Included as a bonus at the end is a Warner Bros. Private Snafu cartoon, **Snafuperman**. Intended as a lesson on the importance of studying the army field manual, Snafu decides he doesn't need to study when he is magically endowed with super powers. Paramount's original Superman theme music is played when Snafu switches identities. (Apparently no one was concerned about music copyrights for mere training films). Unfortunately, the version used on this laserdisc is a poor, scratchy copy. A much better version appears on the *Complete Uncensored Private Snafu vol. 1* (reviewed last issue).

Jim Korkis'

Animation Anecdotes

Tidbits and Trivia

Where's the Sugar?

One of the most successful animated series of the late sixties was *The Archies*. In fact, in 1969 at the height of the cartoon show's popularity, the "Archie" comic book title alone sold over a million copies a month while many other best selling comic books were only selling about 300,000 copies. Part of the reason for this popularity was the idea to market the Archie characters as a Monkees-style singing group. Don Kirshner, the man behind the Monkee's song hits, was brought in to supervise the music.

The Archies' biggest hit was their second single, "Sugar Sugar" which was a song that the Monkees had turned down recording in 1967.

Others Thought He Looked Like the Dog

Peter Noone was a member of the popular British singing group Herman's Hermits. The producer of the group thought the band would do well in America because Noone resembled John F. Kennedy. However, the other members of the band thought Noone looked more like Sherman, the boy sidekick of Mr. Peabody the dog from the cartoon segment of *The Bullwinkle Show*. Somehow the name got jumbled from Sherman to Herman and a record success was born.

Lip Service

In the Disney film **Spaced Invaders** (1990), the little girl tries to hide the true identity of the Martians by telling an adult that the names of the three Martians are Clutch, Spinner, and Paddlefoot, the names of the three main characters on the syndicated cartoon show *Clutch Cargo* from 1959, where real mouths were superimposed over cartoon faces.

Abby's Animated Answer

The "Dear Abby" column from April 4, 1991 quotes June Foray Donovan of Woodland Hills, whose quote originally appeared ine *The Wall Street Journal*. The quote? "Happily, good things come to those Kuwaits." That wordplay on the situation in the Middle East and the old phrase "Good things come to those who wait" was, unbeknownst to Abby, the brainchild of one of the most popular voice talents in animation. June Foray has done the voices for Rocky the Flying Squirrel, Witch Hazel, Tweety's Granny, and countless others.

Should Disney Worry?

Kitty Kelly, renowned for her unathorized biographies of Frank Sinatra and Nancy Reagan told a reporter in April 1991 that "Hell, for a million bucks, I'd write about Donald Duck."

No Monkeying Around

When director Doug Wildey was involved with the Saturday morning animated series *Return to the Planet of the Apes* in 1975, he ran up against NBC's "Emulative Clause." Basically, the clause stated that something from an animated series needed to be eliminated if a six year old child could physically emulate what he sees on the cartoon. Wildey discovered that the network would not allow him to equip the apes with machine guns or knives or clubs or pistols or hand grenades because of the fear that a six year old child might be able to emulate the action. (The network did relent somewhat by allowing rifles to be strapped to ape soldiers' backs but only if they were never used.)

Finally, in desperation, Wildey asked if it would be OK to use Howitzers. The network agreed that they could not think of a way a six year old could operate a Howitzer so Wildey loaded the series with the weapon and stated that "we had them on caissons following jeeps and we had them blowing away mountain tops and we had Howitzers going all the time because the Emulative Clause stopped at a Howitzer."

Blooge and Vroop

The Fox television series *Parker Lewis Can't Lose* is noted for its surreal sound effects. The live action series about the adventures of a high school student and his friends actually uses sound effects from the Hanna-Barbera cartoon library to enhance the show. In fact, many of the sound engineers for the series come from an animated background and are familiar with sound cues like *bloogle*, *whistle splat*, and *vroop*.

Oy Vey!

When **An American Tail** was released in 1986, there were several promotional tie-ins. One of the most visible was with McDonald's where if you bought McDonald's gift certificates you could get a free **American Tail** Christmas stocking. The only trouble was that **An American Tail** was the story of a Jewish mouse, Feivel Mousekewitz.

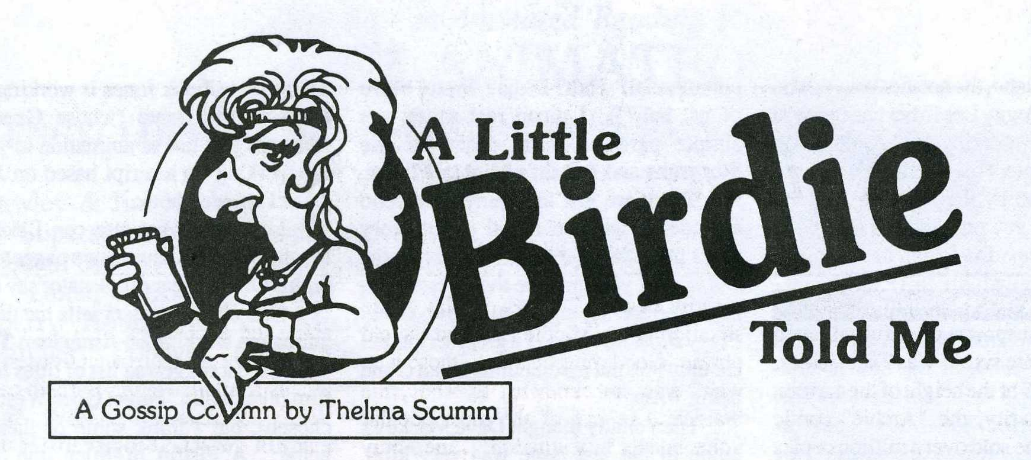
McDonald's quickly withdrew the offer and substituted story books which irnocally misspelled Feivel's name. (Actually, Feivel's name is also misspelled on the official credits for the film as well so it's hard to totally blame McDonald's for that slip.

The Real Natasha

Sally Kellerman portrays Natasha Fatale in the live action film **Boris and Natasha**. The character is from the animated *Bullwinkle* show created by Jay Ward.

"Mr. Ward was something of a recluse," said Kellerman, "but there was a Bullwinkle shop in Los Angeles [The Dudley Do-Right Emporium] and I was researching my Natasha part so I went in there one day anonymously to look around, and a woman waited on me who turned out to be Mrs. Ward. When I finished shopping, ego took over and I introduced myself. Mrs. Ward said 'Oh, but you *are* Natasha! My husband must meet you.' Then she got out Mr. Ward, and he came out and was polite when she said I was to be Natasha but he was certainly not enthusiastic."

You can send Jim Korkis your own animation anecdotes care of Animato!



by Thelma Scumm

Hello, drearies! I'm back again! Thank you all so much for the cards and letters urging my return! In fact, beacuse of your fabulous letters, the evil editor has agreed to give little old me another full page for my obnoxious ramblings! Ooh, I am *so* excited!

Well! Lots of important and exciting gossip and news to share with you this time, so let's get started.

Disney's deal with John Lasseter of Pixar fame seems to be doing well. They've got him working on a new computer animated feature for them. Let's just hope it isn't **Tron II**. John, I'm sure, is mucho happy to be leaving behind those commercials - nice though they were - to be able to do some real stuff with stories and characters and no commercial purpose. Oops! Silly me! He's working for Disney, isn't he?

Disney's next big feature, aimed for 1992, is **Aladdin**. Of course! Once Richard Williams announced that after **Roger Rabbit** he was finally going to be able to complete **The Thief and the Cobbler**, whoosh! In rushes Disney with an Arabian fairy tale. Par for the course (see John Cawley's *Get Animated!* column this issue). By the way, it is supposed to be a big secret, but remember you read it here first: Robin Williams is doing the voice of the genie for the **Aladdin** flick. So much for *that* secret.

Now that both **Fantasia** and **Rescuers Down Under** are out on tape, can **Snow White** be far behind? Hey, do you suppose those Disney folk have decided to forget the existence of **Black Cauldron** and **Fox and the Hound**?

Disney has also decided against making a sequel to **Little Mermaid** and is instead working on a Saturday morning TV series about Ariel before she meets Prince Eric. Don't expect anything until Fall of '92. **Roger Rabbit**, meanwhile, will also have a prequel due out in '93!

Big suit in **Simpson** land! It seems that Klasky Csupo, the studio that outbidded everyone else for the animation (by not being unionized) is having, well, employee trouble. the animators are suing the big KG (the boss of whom looks amazingly like Homer's boss at the Power Plant) for overtime wages owed.

The inside scoop about **The Simpsons** by the way is that its success is due more to Jim Brooks (producer) rather than "creator" Matt Groening. Brooks really fleshed out Groening's characters and he really oversees all scripts (which of course are what makes Simpsons so special). Groening, by the way, does not own the rights to the characters and as such makes practically nothing off of all the merchandizing. Hey, Matt, does the name "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit" mean anything to you?

Speaking of **Simpsons**, the reason the show started three months later than planned was that the animation was sent elsewhere (costs you know) and for some strange reason, the animators thought the show *wasn't funny enough*. They added all sorts of sick humor to it, completely misunderstanding the satirical elements, and as a result, over 95% of the first season had to be scrapped and redone. Then they had problems with the network censors who couldn't get it out of their heads that this *wasn't* a children's cartoon.

So what's Wonderkid Steven Spielberg up to these days besides **American Tail II: The Wrath of Feivel**? Believe it or not, he's working with Berke Breathed to make an animated **Opus** and **Bill the Cat** adventure (ack!). Let's just hope that he doesn't decide that the two need "cutening up."

Speaking of lowest common denominators, can you believe the new **Hanna Barbarian**: **Yo, Yogi!** I am not making this up. Once more, we get child versions of adults cartoon characters hamming it up for our collective yuks. Yuk. Also keep an eye out for the new expensive Hanna Barbera coffee table art book. This is not a book to be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force.

Also I'm told that in the upcoming **Tom and Jerry** feature film, the two antagonists not only work together to fight evil and injustice (and promote political correctness) but also talk! Is nothing sacred? Why not just use two other characters? If they look like Tom and Jerry and act like the Care Bears, what's the point? For that matter, bring back Pixie and Dixie!

Ooh, and say, have you seen John Kricfalusi's newest, **Ren and Stimpy**? (On Nickelodeon). It was supposed to run for a limited time and by the second week, it was already showing a rerun! My, my! Just like John's **Beany and Cecil**! History repeats again. It seems that Kricfalusi has wonderful designs (I just *love* his artwork) and his animation is smooth and so original but he lacks something when it comes to comic timing and storytelling (and meeting deadlines)! According to my anonymous source in his studio, the main problem is that he surrounds himself with yes men who think he's a genius. John, ya shoulda stayed with Raplh Bakshi a bit longer.

Neil Papiano, the hotshot lawyer who represented Peggy Lee in her case against Disney, is representing Alex Anderson in his case to protect his interests in characters controlled by the Jay Ward studio. Anderson, as you probably do not know, created Dudley Do-Right in 1948 and Rocky and Bullwinkle in 1950.

It seems that Anderson was a close friend of Ward from the 5th grade until Ward died in 1989. It was he who convinced Ward to help him develop low cost animation for TVand they made **Crusader Rabbit.**. It was during this time that they made unsold pilots that starred Rocky, Bullwinkle and Dudley.

In 1957, Anderson entered into a written agreement that gave Ward half interest in characters Anderson owned. Anderson received compensation for his characters until Ward's death in 1989. Anderson states that he wasn't concerned when the payments stopped until he read about Disney paying millions for the video rights to his characters. Oooh! What a brave man to go against Disney lawyers!

Meanwhile, Ted Key, who created Peabody and Sherman for Ward and is best known for his comic strip "Hazel," is also upset that he also has not been paid anything in years by the Ward studio.

Sigh. Is there no one to believe in any more?

Certainly not this "Animated Stroies From the New Testament" series of videotapes that are being shamelessly plugged on cable. Former Disney animator Richard Rich (*Ritchie Rich?!!!*) gives us the miracles of Jesus brought to life with great animated special effects! See blue eyed caucasian Jesus and his all American disciples beat the evil hook nosed evil Jews who killed Jesus! What is this, David Duke's version of the Bible? No thanks! Not only is the animation bad in these things, so is the moralizing by these bigots. And say, does anyone know where the profits from these sales go?

Well, **Tiny Toons** is now in its second year, and I'm still disappointed. It coulda been a contendah! I don't expect quality from **My Little Pony**, but with the budget and the talent Warners has assembled, you'd think they'd be willing to take a few more risks, huh?

I'm talking about real chances, not the *Mad* magazine version of satire ("Did you see how we made fun of that TV commercial? Huh? Didja? Pretty brave of us, huh?") I mean real satire, not simple parody. Real satire is **The Simpsons and Bakshi's Mighty Mouse**.

There are just too many cutseypoo epsiodes where the moral of the story takes precedence over the humor or the story. Can you imagine the guys at Termite Terrace saying "You know, *Great Piggy Bank Robbery* is a great script, but shouldn't we put in something about crime being wrong?"

I personally thought Dave Mackey's guide in the last issue was very kind. There are some very good episodes (I love the celebrity cameos in *Hollywood Plucky* and *Day for Knight* and some of the quickie bits in *KACME-TV* and the whole concept behind *Who Bopped Bugs Bunny?* - in fact, the latter seemed to me like a great cartoon attempting to break out of the **Tiny Toons** mold and head straight for **Mighty Mouse** land! (It was after all directed by MM alumni Kent Butterworth). Well, even for all my criticisms, it's still the best afternoon cartoons show and I'm glad it beat the awful **Captain Planet** for the Emmy.

Oh, and speaking of Termite Terrace, there may very well be a Termite Terrace feature film in our future! It seems that Chuck Jones is working with Director Joe Dante (whose **Gremlins** films are just full of animation in-jokes) are working on a script based on Jones' ***Chuck Amuck*** book.

Let's see, what else can I skewer? Oooh, I just love having two pages to play with! (Or did I hear my Senator say that?)

One of my insiders tells me that the animators working on **American Tail II** submitted a suggested list of titles for the film (eventually "Feivel Goes West" was chosen), but I think some of these are better: A Fistful of Mice, the Texas Chainsaw Mouseacre, Little Mouse on the Prarie, Feivel Get You Six, Saturday Night Feivel, Of Mice and Mice, Singing in the Drain, and The Low Ranger.

By the way, Hanna Barbera are working on a new film called **The Endangered** - no one tells a gossip anything, I swear - but I was able to get my hand on some of the character designs and I must admit they look pretty good! I've placed some here for you. Shhh! Don't tell anyone you saw it here first!

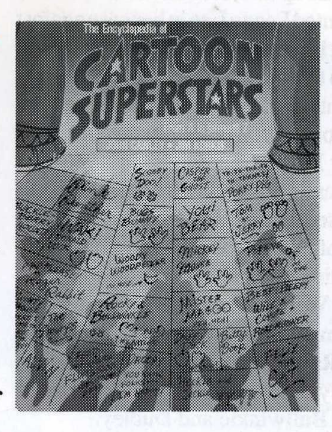
Well, that's all for this time. Be sure to keep those cards and letters coming - remember that I keep all my sources confidential - and (all together now) TURN OUT THAT LIGHT!



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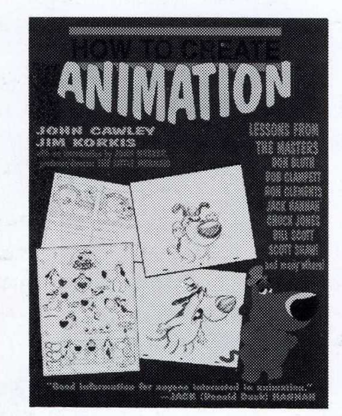


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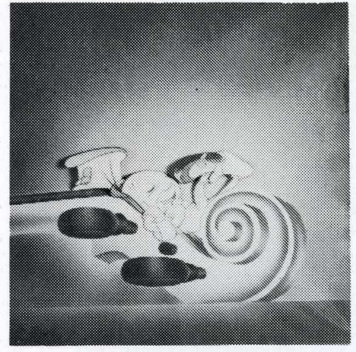
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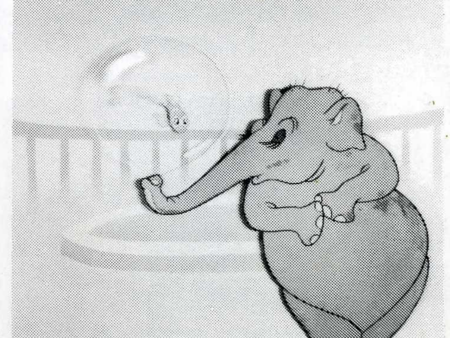
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